

Supply—Fisheries

this item carries I hope the minister will give us as clear-cut a statement as to where the government of which he is a member stands on this important question. I am happy to say that I felt fully able to support the policy pronouncement by the previous minister in this respect and I hope I shall be able to say that I am prepared to support the policy statement which the present minister will give in this respect.

The whole question, Mr. Chairman, of course, has aspects and ramifications that go far beyond the federal Department of Fisheries itself; but I think the power that rests in our present constitution and under the authority of this parliament with the Minister of Fisheries is pretty clearly defined in relation to what can or cannot be done in this respect, and that in many ways one can fairly say that the Minister of Fisheries has the whip hand in this matter. Therefore I think the people of British Columbia are entitled to know where he stands upon it.

I was saying, however, that it has aspects which do go beyond the narrower limits of the responsibility of a federal Minister of Fisheries. It has, of course, ramifications that go into the field of activity that is carried on as a result of decisions made in the legislature of our province. I think one of the broader aspects that the people of British Columbia are going to have to take into consideration involves some of the assumptions that have been made that the present lopsided development of our province is necessary and desirable. By that I mean to say that in a province which would easily swallow two or three fair-sized European countries within its borders most of the population is at present concentrated in one little corner.

Some of the statements made about the development of power on the Fraser or on the Columbia seem to be predicated on the idea that endless expansion of power requirements for the population in that one little corner of the province is something which is going to have to continue and should continue. I am not suggesting this is a matter which the Minister of Fisheries should solve tonight but it is a question about which I believe the people of British Columbia should be thinking a great deal more than they have. Some of the statements revolving around the question of bringing Columbia river power into the lower mainland area are predicated on that assumption.

Yet we have vast areas of the province which are among the most sparsely populated parts of the country and not all these areas are areas that are covered by 10,000-foot

mountain peaks. Various suggestions which have been made relating to the whole question of power and the use of the Fraser or Columbia or both for power purposes are affected by proposals for the development of power and other resources in the Rocky mountain trench. That, of course, is a subject of considerable controversy in the arena of discussion in British Columbia. I know that when C.C.F. spokesmen in the legislature of British Columbia have objected to what is known as the Wenner-Gren arrangement or deal, suggestions have been made that the C.C.F. is opposed to the development of the Rocky mountain trench. Naturally I have had the opportunity of discussing the matter quite thoroughly with some of these people and I should like to say that to my knowledge there is no objection to the development of that particular part of our province or of any other part of the province but rather to the particular method which the present provincial administration apparently wishes to follow in that development. That method, of course, is to place an area almost the size of England in the hands of one private development corporation.

Mr. Patterson: That is not right at all.

Mr. Barnett: I have seen the memorandum of intent.

Mr. Patterson: I have too.

Mr. Barnett: I have seen the memorandum of intent and I have read it several times.

Mr. Patterson: So have I.

Mr. Barnett: And I have listened to it being discussed. However, as I say, my main purpose in bringing this subject into the discussion is because it has been related to the whole question of power development in the more southerly rivers.

Mr. Blackmore: Just because you want to play dirty politics.

Mr. Barnett: Of course, when people say things with which the hon. member for Lethbridge does not agree and about which he probably does not know a great deal he always suggests that it is dirty politics.

Mr. Blackmore: You do not now know anything about it.

Mr. Winch: When you refer to dirty politics, what is it that is before the courts of British Columbia now?

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Rea): Order.

Mr. Barnett: I am just trying to recall where I was. I was saying that this question is one of great importance and in order to clarify what I have in mind to say I was trying to point out that, contrary to allegations