

Adjournment Debate

That has been the dilemma until reports started to come from the British Columbia Hydro Corporation—which is a publicly owned utility—indicating that we may very well have in British Columbia a significant surplus of power. We know now that certainly the state of Idaho is interested in some of that surplus power. As good neighbours we should consider whether we can provide some of it to them.

The committee that has opposed the flooding of the Skagit River has written to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson) asking, in view of the fact we are now going to be in a surplus power position in the province of British Columbia, what co-operation the federal government will offer through the National Energy Board if British Columbia sells this surplus power to our American friends—and they are our friends. The committee suggested that some attempt should be made by the federal authorities in Canada to exercise pressure on the state of Washington and the city of Seattle for a reasonable and fair resolution of the dispute between Canada, the province of British Columbia, the state of Washington and the city of Seattle over this river valley flooding.

Keeping in mind that this House has stated that we are unalterably opposed to the flooding of the river valley, in all fairness and decency perhaps we should make some attempt to provide our American friends—and we who live in British Columbia and are very close to them consider them our friends—with some of the power they need.

● (2207)

The question which I put to the Secretary of State for External Affairs a couple of weeks ago was as follows: What steps is the government of Canada prepared to take in terms of its ongoing negotiations with the government of the United States to make sure that its position is made clear to the officials of Seattle City Power and Light Company? Because—and I say this through you, Mr. Speaker, to all members of the House—there is no way that British Columbia will accept the flooding of this river valley and there is no way that Canada, our proud country, should accept that flooding.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dupras (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the current controversy over the flooding of the Skagit valley results from the fact that in 1942, over thirty years ago, the International Joint Commission approved the application submitted by the Seattle City Power and Light Company to raise the height of the Ross dam in the state of Washington, which would have resulted in the flooding of some 5,000 acres of land on the Canadian side. The commission approved this application, provided the city of Seattle and British Columbia agreed on the compensation to be paid to the province, which they did in 1967. Since then, efforts to block this project have been made by people concerned about the environment. Of course, the possibility exists that this project may be blocked or delayed by U.S. administrative red tape, but we remain convinced that

the best way to solve this problem is through direct negotiations between the parties involved, namely British Columbia and the city of Seattle. Besides, the American government is also of that opinion. Over a year ago British Columbia started negotiating directly, offering electricity produced by the province in exchange for cancellation of the project. Those negotiations were interrupted last fall for the Seattle mayoralty election, but it would seem that they will soon resume.

Twice, my hon. colleague from Vancouver South alluded to it a while ago, in November 1973 and in 1977, the House voted unanimously against the destruction of that important part of our natural heritage. That threat has been the subject of lengthy discussions between representatives of both countries, as well as between Prime Minister Trudeau and President Ford at the end of 1974, our government trying to create an atmosphere conducive to a negotiated settlement.

The Secretary of State of External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson) recently received a letter from the Ross committee advising him of its suggestions with regard to current negotiations. The latter are now being looked into very seriously. Generally speaking, we are quite pleased with the events mentioned by the hon. member because they improve chances of reaching a negotiated settlement, and we are willing to do everything in our power to achieve that objective. We are convinced, on the other hand, that as in all our relations with the United States, those negotiations must go on in an atmosphere of confidence and harmony, and rest on a sound understanding of the mutual interests of our two countries.

[*English*]

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL—PROPOSED REMOVAL OF EMPLOYEES FROM CHURCHILL, MAN.

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the National Research Council pulling 18 families out of Churchill, Manitoba. I brought up this matter first under Standing Order 43 on April 3, and again in the question period on April 24 in a question to the minister responsible.

What has happened is that over a period of some 30 years we have seen the building up of Churchill, which started in 1946 with the coming of the armed services to Churchill, and then the building of Fort Churchill. After a period of some 30 years, the government decided to dismantle Fort Churchill and to help redevelop the town of Churchill. The redevelopment cost some \$50 million which was shared by the provincial and federal governments. Following the completion of the redevelopment, the federal government withdrew its services from Churchill. The CBC will be leaving Churchill in the month of June. The corporation has 12 people working at that station.

Now the National Research Council, which has 22 families in Churchill, and is responsible for the space research program there, is also partly moving out. Of the 22 NRC families, 18 will be moving to Gimli, Manitoba, probably this fall. That is the plan of the department. They are going to move the 18