

*Hydro Development*

future. As readily available B.C. timber resources dwindle and harvesting moves to difficult terrain farther up river valleys, land slides or erosion problems are likely to occur to the detriment of entire streams.

On another front, with a projected hydro power deficit predicted in B.C. as early as 1985, one can anticipate renewed overtures seeking shared or primary use of major rivers to generate power. With current economic conditions encouraging an expansion of B.C. agricultural production, irrigation needs for new farm lands will become an even greater competitor with fish in the use of water. The mining industry—hardrock, placer and, most recently, coal—is also expanding dramatically and making its own unique demands on water resources. Finally, the prospect of greatly increased shipment of oil by tankers and the spectre of possible major oil spills poses another damage threat.

● (1740)

I know that departmental officials are working on these and other initiatives to improve and strengthen the department's management role on the west coast and elsewhere and, granted a reasonable degree of co-operation, I am sure their efforts will meet with success.

**Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta):** Mr. Speaker, given the optimistic outlook presented by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Henderson) as to the commitment of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. LeBlanc) to husbanding the environment of British Columbia, at least in so far as our salmon resource is concerned, one would have to wonder why the minister is hesitant about disclosing the documents which have been called for by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) in motion No. 28, which is a call for the production of correspondence, telegrams and other documents exchanged between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and British Columbia Hydro, because if all the things the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has outlined are true, there ought to be nothing to hide.

I want to start by complimenting the hon. member for Skeena for bringing this very important matter before the House. It is in this type of forum that we can prevent in the future the kinds of disasters which have occurred far too often in British Columbia and in other parts of Canada in the past. However, in the comments of the hon. member for Skeena I found a hint that he feels there is something sinister in the fact that officials of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans would be meeting and corresponding with officials of British Columbia Hydro about the possibility of developing additional hydroelectric power on the streams of British Columbia.

I think the hon. member for Skeena typifies that overreaction to any environmental problem, which acts as a valuable conscience for our society but which sometimes makes it difficult for people to extract the facts and the truth from a lot of rhetoric and exaggeration. I am saying that this is an effective role for the hon. member for Skeena to play in serving as an environmental conscience, but as a former

professional person; a mechanical engineer, I believe man and nature can live in harmony. In fact, evidence shows that man can improve upon nature, and has in many ways, which makes our modern twentieth century civilization as comfortable as it is. Granted, there are problems and some disasters about which I want to say something, but I certainly agree with the hon. member for Skeena when he says that these documents should be available for public perusal. There ought to be nothing to hide, as I said a few moments ago.

I am glad the hon. member for Skeena said he was not opposed to the rational development of power on the waterways of British Columbia and in other parts of Canada because if we are to provide comfortable housing and meaningful employment for our young people who are to follow and if we are to feed the Third World nations and help them to develop their economies, we will have to develop our national resources in some manner in harmony with nature. However, we cannot avoid developing those resources and producing power as an important adjunct of that process.

The hon. member for Skeena seems to have constructed a very good case that there are certain documents in existence and that for some reason they are not being made available. When I was an alderman in a community in British Columbia, I had to deal with a very difficult problem. There was always a hue and cry as to whether documents should be made available or kept secret, and whether we should discuss things in camera or whether everything should be discussed before the public. I suggest that when planners are trying to lay out a framework for some concept of development, they ought to be free to do that, just as Members of Parliament sometimes, within the confines of caucus, like to talk and think out loud about concepts without having the pressure of public opinion on their backs. However, I submit that once documents relating to major developments of the scale we are talking about here are completed, printed, signed and exchanged between governments or departments, those documents should be made freely available. I do not know the reason for which the department and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans could argue to the contrary.

I recall in municipal politics that if one disclosed what he was thinking about too early, then outspoken and sometimes reactionary environmental groups would ascribe all kinds of motives and exaggerate excessively, to the point that a very good project might be stopped in its tracks even before the studies had been done to the extent required to make the case and to make it on sound technical and quantitative bases. On the other hand, if documents are withheld, then there is always the suspicion that somebody has something to hide or that there is a great conspiracy. There is always the danger, as we have seen in the Amax case in particular, that when the facts are known, it will be too late to reverse initiatives which have been taken because of the implications for employment or in the case of the Amax project at Alice Arm because of the implications for investment. There is always the danger that perhaps we will not find out until after our light bulbs are lit by a new hydroelectric dam, and then we will be so comfort-