

*Beauharnois Power Bills*

said: Those rights, if any, are very hard to determine, and if they are in existence are not considerable.

This is why the committee on the Beauharnois question took the trouble to insert in the first two paragraphs of its conclusions a proviso that the rights of the province must be respected. May I read just a paragraph or two:

Your committee recommends:

1. That the parliament of Canada take such action as may be within its power, and without prejudicing the rights of the province of Quebec, to procure the development of this project in such a manner as will best serve the people of Canada.

2. That should the rights of the Dominion and the province of Quebec come in conflict, every effort be put forth to arrive at a satisfactory agreement, so that the project may not be imperilled by delay.

I conclude by saying this: The provincial rights of Quebec I have at heart as much as has the hon. member for Quebec East.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Who said otherwise? Why this attack?

Mr. DUPRE: My hon. friend said a few minutes ago that some people did not share this view. When challenged by the hon. the Minister of Public Works he explained that he did not intend to apply this remark to the members on this side of the house. But I know quite well that part of the speech of my hon. friend will be circulated through Canada and particularly in the province of Quebec. That is why I want to show exactly where we stand. Without knowing or affirming what the provincial rights are or may be, we say: Whatever those rights are they must be respected in their entirety. With regard to the rights which may belong to the province of Quebec we say: Hands off Quebec; hands off provincial rights! As soon as those rights are determined once and for all by our courts or the privy council, it will be the duty of this or any other government or party to see that they remain untouched.

On Bill No. 144, to declare certain works of the Beauharnois Light, Heat and Power Company, Limited, to be for the general advantage of Canada.

Section 1 agreed to.

On section 2—Governor in council may make orders, rules or regulations.

Mr. GARDINER: Before we proceed further, Mr. Chairman, may I call the attention of the committee to the fact that one [Mr. Dupre.]

of the reasons why this Beauharnois project is going to be declared a work for the general advantage of Canada is that it is intended eventually to use this section of the river as part of the St. Lawrence deep waterway system. My first inquiry of the minister in charge of the bill is this: When they deal with this matter is it the intention of the government to take over the property rights of the Beauharnois project in so far as the canal section is concerned?

Mr. CAHAN: So far as this canal section is concerned, it is brought under the legislative jurisdiction of the parliament of Canada, and the government of Canada is authorized by purchase or otherwise, even by expropriation, to acquire the lands and works appertaining to navigation. I think that is quite sufficient an announcement for the present. I cannot give an expression of opinion as to whether that will be done immediately or not.

Mr. GARDINER: It is not my intention to delay the committee. I merely desire to find out if possible what are the intentions of the government with regard to this legislation. We know that order in council 422 contains certain provisions which were made for the purpose of using this Beauharnois project as part of the St. Lawrence deep waterways navigation canal. If this Beauharnois project had been gone on with without interference, and if later this country had decided to develop the St. Lawrence deep waterway, we would have been in the position as a country of using this stretch of the canal which was owned by private interests. I cannot conceive of anything more humiliating to this country than to be placed in that position. In view of the fact that the government intend to deal with this matter I should like to get a very plain answer from the government, yes or no, as to whether, when they take over this project, it is the intention of the government to retain possession so that when the St. Lawrence deep waterway is finally developed we shall not have to pass through private property but through the property of the Dominion of Canada.

Mr. CAHAN: I understand that it is the intention of the government that when the deep water canal is completed through the Soulanges section, that is between lake St. Francis and lake St. Louis, it and the works that appertain to it, which are necessary for navigation, shall be vested in the