

Columbia River Treaty

go on drawing up protocols till doomsday and one still would not be able to guarantee that within the principles outlined by the treaty one would have the precise situation desired with regard to any particular facet of the agreement.

Mr. Douglas: Could I ask the hon. gentleman a question at this point?

Mr. Dinsdale: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Douglas: It is not a matter of dotting "i's" and crossing "t's". Since this is a treaty for 60 years and the legal terminology is important, are my hon. friend and the party with which he is associated satisfied that the treaty gives to Canada the right to divert water from the Columbia river if hydroelectric generation is involved in the consumptive use?

Mr. Dinsdale: I intend to deal with this specific point. In fact I am going to spend most of my time dealing with this right of diversion, if I can delay my answer until that time.

I come now to the criticisms which have been raised. I am not going to deal with the engineering aspects as to the relative advantages of the various sequences. This is another point which is debatable, and the decision has been made to accept the treaty sequence. Neither shall I deal with the merits of the high Arrow versus the low Arrow, because that matter has been dealt with. Notwithstanding the remarks of the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, I feel that this question has been dealt with in a very competent and comprehensive way by the engineers who appeared before the committee. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands suggested that these witnesses were all prejudiced engineering witnesses inasmuch as they were from the respective governments which had negotiated the treaty. However, I would point out that the Montreal engineering firm is made up of a consortium of engineers of the widest experience.

With regard to the time factor, much was made of the fact that the engineer who appeared before the committee on behalf of the water resources branch was a comparatively young man of about ten years' experience.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Perhaps my hon. friend will agree that his testimony before that committee indicated his exceptional competence and his dedication to the task assigned to him by the government. I think it

is only fair that we should say this, because of the suggestions which have been made that public servants have not discharged their duties conscientiously.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, hon. members are taking my words right out of my mouth this morning and are anticipating everything I am going to say.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): This man is an outstanding public servant.

Mr. Dinsdale: However, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands made something of the fact that this gentleman had only ten years' experience in engineering, and this was entirely within the framework of the water resources branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. But I would point out that his opinion was strongly supported by this consortium of the most outstanding authorities who are identified with the Montreal engineering firm. I would say that the very fact that they confirmed the opinion of Mr. Gordon MacNabb shows his competence in the matter. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs has indicated, Mr. MacNabb performed in brilliant fashion before the committee. I worked with Mr. MacNabb when I was minister of northern affairs and when Mr. MacNabb was operating behind the scenes. I think this was the first occasion on which he had appeared in the lion's den in the form of the parliamentary committee on external affairs, and he demonstrated beyond shadow of a doubt that he was fully competent as an engineer to deal with the engineering complexities of this treaty.

I should like also to carry this question of criticism of the Canadian negotiators a little further. Some strong sentiments have been expressed that the Canadian team of negotiators were completely incompetent to wrestle with their more capable counterparts from the United States. We had the pleasure of listening to a former illustrious member of this house and member of the former government, Hon. Davie Fulton, who appeared before the committee to explain his role as chief negotiator for this treaty. I am sure that he too demonstrated a grasp of the subject that was more than impressive. He had been away from the treaty since he left this chamber. He had not been closely in touch with it for some two years, but he indicated it was no superficial knowledge that he had. He was able to pinpoint the trouble areas,