

the reason that by the adoption of that principle, the best ultimate results ensue to all concerned. It is contended that the best results do not ensue possibly to one individual or to another. It is contended and has been strongly urged by Mr. Backus, that the best results do not accrue to him as owner of the Norman dam, that he could get results more commercially advantageous to himself by such control as the dam gives him power to exercise, giving him all the power he may desire at one time, even though at another time when he does not want it, there might be relatively a very small amount of power. But this point must be taken into account, that the control of navigation is federal, that the law of this country for many, many years has provided that there shall be no impediment placed in any navigable stream save by authority of the Government of Canada. The Winnipeg river has been held by the courts of this Dominion to be a navigable stream within the meaning of the British North America Act, and that being the case, there was no power in the first place to erect the Norman dam in this navigable stream without consent, and consent, as a matter of fact, was never asked for; at least, it never was obtained. Consequently, such rights as might otherwise be argued for are in an inchoate, if not a non-existent, state as regards that dam, there never having been permission for its erection on the part of the Federal Government.

I have explained very briefly the purposes of the Bill. It is to secure such control as ought to be exercised pursuant to the finding of the commission, and at least pending the final adoption of the report by the two governments, and probably afterwards—to secure such control as is in consonance with the finding of the commission, not interfering, of course, with United States rights in the meantime. The reason it is joint is this: that the Provincial Government of Ontario has jurisdiction in respect of water-powers on the river, while the Federal Government has jurisdiction in respect of navigation and of water-power on the Winnipeg river westerly from the province of Ontario. Consequently, it was thought that joint legislation would secure the object best, and be best fitted to take care of the very complex problems that are associated with the whole Lake of the Woods water supply. That is, in brief, the purpose of the legislation.

[Mr. Meighen.]

Mr. MURPHY: I desire to thank the right hon. the Prime Minister for the explanation which he has just given to the committee of the reasons underlying this Bill. The Bill is of very great public importance, affecting not only the people of two provinces, but the people of the two neighbouring countries, the United States and Canada. For that reason the explanation given by the right hon. gentleman this afternoon will be widely read and will be very generally appreciated. I take it from what he has said that the existing board of control is composed of representatives of the Dominion and of the province of Ontario.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: Then may I ask the right hon. gentleman if the board which is intended to act jointly with the Canadian board has yet been appointed by the Government of the United States.

Mr. MEIGHEN: No. I think there is no international board because they have not yet accepted the finding of the commission. I should say that the two Governments are, in my opinion, not far apart.

Mr. MURPHY: Thank you.

Progress reported.

CORRUPT PRACTICES BILL

On the motion of Hon. Hugh Guthrie (Acting Solicitor General), Bill No. 39, to amend the statutes relating to corrupt practices at elections, was read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mr. Boivin in the Chair.

On section 1—"illegal practices":

Mr. MURPHY: What is this?

Mr. GUTHRIE: The object of this Bill is to bring the three other Acts into harmony with the Dominion Elections Act passed last session. The clause which you have just read, Mr. Chairman, introduces into the Controverted Elections Act the offence "illegal practices." In the former Dominion Elections Act we only knew the offence called "corrupt practices," but this new offence was introduced in the Dominion Elections Act which we passed last session. It is desired to make the Dominion Converted Elections Act conform with the Dominion Elections Act in that respect. Also in the Dominion Elections Act the term "official agent" was introduced for the first time and certain duties were prescribed for that official. That office was