

Government Orders

My colleague said that we in the New Democratic Party would be voting against Bill C-23 because it weakens the potential power of the public to have a say as to what happens to them, their communities, their water, and their power. Even if we did not see that clearly ourselves, it would be impossible for us not to listen to the ghosts of the people who are buried under the waters of the Arrow Lakes and the Columbia River and in the communities of Burton and Arrow Park.

They paid the price, even in their burial places, of having that continental energy policy thrust down their throats. We are suspicious, and we have good reason. The government can only say: "Well, trust us, trust the bureaucracies, trust the power utilities, trust B.C. Hydro, trust all the other power corporations, be they public or private across the country, and trust the governments, our provincial governments and our federal government. We do not need to have public hearings. We will leave that up to the politicians and the bureaucrats to decide".

On the basis of our experience, our predecessors' experience and his own experience can he have that kind of trust in any government, especially considering that it was a Conservative government that negotiated and a Liberal government that implemented the treaty which hurt our communities and our people in the past?

Mr. MacWilliam: To answer the question specifically with regard to trust, I think that to a large measure I speak for my constituents in general when I say that there is a great distrust of the actions of this government with regard to entering into the free trade agreement and the sell-out of our energy and non-renewable resources.

My colleague's recollection of the arguments presented during the election on the free trade agreement as it applies to energy is very accurate. People are very concerned about it, and are still so. The fact is that we have seen the ravages of the effects of damming and the erasing of thousands of hectares of viable agricultural land, and changing the entire lifestyle of communities throughout a whole valley. I speak specifically of the damming of the Columbia River when the Columbia River Power Treaty was initiated. We have seen what can happen to the economies. We have seen what can happen to the lifestyle in a valley when that happens. We

are concerned about it. There is a great deal of distrust of both federal and provincial actions.

We know, for example, that the Columbia River Power Treaty is coming up for renegotiation in 1992. It is very likely to expect that our American friends to the south will not want less water over the spillways. They probably will want more. For an area such as the Okanagan—Shuswap that is traditionally semi-arid because it is water-short, that poses some very serious problems for us. People are very much afraid that once you turn the taps on, you never turn them off. This brings to mind another plan that was dreamed up by our friends in the United States. I do not know what they think of us up here but they had the gall to dream up the NAWAPA plan, the North America Water and Power Alliance.

It is a simple little idea. You take British Columbia, you damn the south end of the Rocky Mountain trench, you flood the whole rest of the Rocky Mountain trench right up into the Yukon and use it as a massive reservoir to feed the Coke machines down in Los Angeles and San Diego. "It is a massive water and energy reservoir". It is arrogance to suggest that British Columbians or Canadians would allow that kind of thing to happen, flooding thousands and thousands of acres of British Columbia to serve as a reservoir for the southwestern U.S. power grid. That plan is still being talked about within the lobby groups that have the ear of the minister of energy.

Look at who negotiated our free trade agreement. Mr. Reisman was the grand designer of the grand canal scheme. It was a simple little plan to take James Bay and dump it into the Mississippi system.

We know what Mr. Reisman said about the water resources in Canada. He said this would be the carrot with which to negotiate the free trade agreement with the United States, and he used it as the carrot. The United States, as is a reasonable response, rubbed its hands in glee. It snatched the carrot, signed the deal, and now we are getting prepared for it to walk away with our energy supplies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Nepean on a question or comment.

Mrs. Gaffney: First I would like to compliment my colleague from the NDP party on a powerful, emotional speech.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!