

*Columbia River Treaty*

B.C., not just in the water resources branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, but with experience all over the world as a consulting engineer on major hydroelectric installations.

I can tell you I was greatly disturbed, in fact ashamed, at the manner in which this courageous old gentleman was treated by certain members of the committee. No attention was paid to his evidence.

No attention at all was paid to the evidence of Mr. Larratt Higgins, who presented a brief which most members of the committee, certainly implied in private conversation with me, was in all respects the most comprehensive and effective brief presented to that committee. My regret is that I was unable to persuade the committee to include that brief as a historic record in the proceedings of the committee for future reference.

Not only, sir, were all the engineering witnesses produced by the government involved in the construction program of the British Columbia hydro and power authority under the terms of this treaty plan, but they were also given extremely restrictive terms of reference when they were engaged by the government. They were constrained to examine solely the aspects of hydroelectric power. One of them indeed was confined merely to a comparison of the financial returns of alternative schemes. Not one of them was commissioned by this government to examine and investigate what is probably the most serious aspect of this whole project and treaty, that is, the aspect of water per se.

I am astonished, Mr. Speaker, that neither the government nor most of their witnesses, nor the members of the committee seemed to be aware of the relative importance today, and the greater importance tomorrow, of water per se as a resource, in distinction to water as a means of producing electric power. It is estimated by the United States department of commerce that the consumption of water in the United States increases by from 35 per cent to 40 per cent every decade.

I was astonished when I read the brief of the government's chief engineering witness, a witness who, we were assured again and again, had competent authority beyond question, the Montreal engineering company, to see his astonishing estimate of the modern consumptive requirements of an industrial society, set at 150 gallons per capita per day. This is a Victorian estimate of the water requirements of a modern industrial society. We had evidence presented to us by another

witness, a man whose job it is to deal with matters of water consumption, in which he gave us some figures of the real consumption requirements today, and he pointed out that in the adjacent United States the average per capita consumption runs as high as 3,500 gallons per capita per day.

This report from the Montreal engineering firm was brought forward and presented to the committee as evidence that could be accepted with a figure of 150 gallons a day. Now, 150 gallons per day might perhaps, and it is a "perhaps", satisfy the requirements of the individual domestic consumer. It cannot come within miles of satisfying the requirements of a modern business community, certainly not a modern community engaged in industrialization. To present such evidence before that committee, with all the prestige that was accorded to this particular concern, I think was grossly misleading to the committee.

I was also interested to see the cavalier manner in which this major witness of the government, the government's most important witness, dismissed the idea of there being in the arid prairie provinces of this country any real desperate shortage of water or likelihood of it in the future, particularly, sir, when we can find no evidence—and I sought for it and asked for it—that this concern had ever made even the most cursory examination of water requirements in the prairie provinces. This again I suggest was in effect causing great misapprehension in the minds of the members of the committee.

I would like to refer to some of the requirements of the prairie provinces as presented to us in the brief brought here by Dr. Cass-Beggs, the head of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, in which he points out that the needs and requirements of water on the prairie provinces are becoming acute and shortly will be desperate.

He deals with the alternatives that were suggested lightly by the Montreal engineering firm, and even more lightly referred to by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin), who has stated of course that even in the unlikely event of the prairie provinces needing to have further water, there are other places from which they could get it more cheaply.

I would like to quote from the brief of the government of Saskatchewan of that day, a brief which I presume was endorsed by the incoming Liberal government of that province, otherwise Dr. Cass-Beggs would not have