

*Columbia River Treaty*

the contrary from an engineering viewpoint which has not been controverted. It would be utter folly not to proceed with the plans that have been so meticulously worked out by two governments of Canada over so many years.

The advantages of the treaty and protocol can be realized without in any way impairing our sovereignty or our ability to draw full advantage for Canada from the waters of the Columbia system. We have also established explicitly and clearly our right to make diversions within the basin or consumptive diversions outside the basin if and when they are needed.

In concluding my remarks on March 3, as reported at page 489 of *Hansard*, I said:

—we have before this house a treaty that should, and will, commend itself to the members of this house, as I am sure it will to the great majority of the people of our country. The plans that have been prepared are good plans. The engineering is nearly finished. The money to be paid by the United States will be raised in the coming weeks. It is for us to decide whether the fruit of years of effort is to be gathered for the benefit of the people of Canada now and in the years to come. I have no doubt, on the basis of the record, what the verdict of this parliament will be.

The results of the consideration by the committee on external affairs have amply confirmed the conviction I then expressed. Witness after witness, either in chief or in response, clearly indicated that there was no exaggeration in the position put forward by those who believe that this treaty and the protocol are in the interests of the owner of the resource, in the interests of Canada and in the interests of responsible and good relations with our neighbour.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that on a matter of this kind, which is not partisan in any sense, we might move quickly, even unanimously. Work can be done this summer. It will be started even in advance of ratification if the decision of parliament is clear. We will begin to feel the good effects at once, and they will benefit our country for generations.

As I have said, I think it has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the treaty and protocol constitute an arrangement that will redound to the enormous advantage of this country for years to come. They represent the efforts of 20 years of careful consideration and the considered policy of two governments of Canada, as well as the viewpoint and the wish of the owner of the resource itself, the government of the province of British Columbia. The treaty and

the protocol are the fruit of two decades of careful study, mature consideration and hard negotiation. We can all take satisfaction from what has been accomplished. The time has now arrived for action.

I commend the present resolution to the favourable consideration of this house in order that such action may begin at once.

**Mr. Stuart A. Fleming (Okanagan-Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, the minister referred to the 20 years which have elapsed since the first discussions and initial negotiations on the Columbia river development began. Since that time perhaps millions of words have been written and many more spoken about this development. Probably at this particular moment in time there is very little more that is either new, or which can add to what has already been written and said on the subject. The exhaustive hearings of the external affairs committee over the past two months on the subject of the Columbia river development have brought forward many briefs. Hours of testimony in answer to questions by members of the committee were given. As the minister has stated, every aspect and facet of the development has been probed, analysed and assessed. We now come to the point where a decision is to be made by this house. It is therefore appropriate to endeavour to summarize, at least briefly, where we stand, where our respective parties stand, and how individuals who have been concerned directly or indirectly with this matter over the years feel at this point when a decision is to be made by this house.

As one who has lived most of his life within the Columbia basin and who has heard of the dreams of people who have foreseen the development of the river, I can say that many generations have passed since the first of our pioneer citizens looked at the immense water flow of the Columbia and realized how its energies might be harnessed. We now come to the point where it is no longer a speculative matter. It is no longer a question of what might be done: We now know what can be done, and we are to make the decision whether it will be done.

During the period of negotiation it was always the objective to establish a foundation for a treaty under which the full power development of the river in Canada could be achieved. So we have a treaty that includes three dams, which are referred to by the treaty primarily as storage dams—or the general reference to their function is as