

The Address—Mr. Broome

COMBINES

DRUGS—INQUIRY AS TO REPORT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Justice, and ask if he is able to indicate when he might be in a position to table the report of the restrictive trade practices commission relating to the pricing and selling policies of certain pharmaceutical houses.

Hon. E. D. Fulton (Minister of Justice): No, I have no specific information on that matter. I know the commission is endeavouring to bring in its report as soon as possible, but I will make inquiries to find out.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed, from Tuesday, February 20, consideration of the motion of Mr. Rodrigue Bourdages for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. E. J. Broome (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, when the house adjourned last night I was dealing with the question of the export of hydro power generated in Canadian plants. I should like to make it quite clear that I am dealing with this subject in a very general way and that my remarks have no relationship to the specific and unique case relating to downstream benefits on the Columbia river. These benefits, Mr. Speaker, are a payment to Canada by power at site in compensation for the flooding of a beautiful valley in British Columbia. This flooding would be of no benefit to British Columbia unless the people of British Columbia received—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I think our sound amplification system is not working well and I hope hon. members will dispose themselves to listen, because it is almost impossible to hear.

Mr. Broome: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I say, unless these benefits flow to the people of British Columbia, unless they are of value to the people of British Columbia then there is no excuse for the flooding of this valley. This question, of course, because of its peculiarity and its uniqueness, is the subject of negotiation between the federal government and the government of British Columbia.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that the export of power should, I think, be considered in the [Mr. Nowlan.]

same way as the export of any other commodity such as gas or oil, except that provision must always be made for the orderly recapture of this power as required by Canada. We do not export gas and oil except when there is a surplus to foreseeable Canadian requirements. The same policy should apply to hydro power.

At this session, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has introduced the subject of a national power grid. Eventually this grid will be built and will bring advantages to all parts of Canada. However, this grid must be based upon hydro power because it will bring power from remote localities, where hydro power is usually developed, to large load consuming centres. Thermal power on the other hand, whether it be coal, oil, gas or nuclear power, is generated in plants adjacent to load consuming centres, and thermal power plants can be scaled in proportion to a particular need. As the load grows extra turbines can be added. By comparison, hydro installations usually result in very large blocks of power becoming immediately available. One cannot dam half a river. When a dam is completed and the reservoir is filled, then the power is available but local demand cannot use all this power. It can only use a small proportion of it.

It seems to me that initially much of such power will be available for export and, as I say, if it is controlled under a treaty or regulations established by the national energy board then the surplus power can be sold for a definite period of time and provision can be made for its orderly recapture. Thermal power usually involves high operating costs; hydro power has large capital costs and low operating costs. Now, however, the gap between power costs, comparing hydro with thermal, is closing. The increased cost of money and increase in transmission costs will ultimately increase the cost of hydro power, but if we wait until local demand can use all the hydro power at any particular site then I think we shall be losing a chance to develop a very real national resource.

We in British Columbia have some 33 million horsepower capacity of hydro energy which is undeveloped, and there is no reason why this hydro energy cannot be developed as markets are available and as prices can be secured which will cover the cost of carrying the new installations until such time as either local demand or the provision of a national grid will allow the marketing of this power in Canada.

I have been asked many times what the Conservative government has done for the people of Canada, and when from memory I have given only a partial list, invariably