

the province of British Columbia as much as any other which has been in the forefront of this fight. It behooves government members to pay close attention to all those things that must be attended to if we are to win that fight.

There was a promise, of course, that there would be a public hearing on this matter. But there never was. What happened finally was that the government promised that this matter would be brought back before the International Joint Commission. Most people engaged in the fight breathed a sigh of relief because they felt if it went back to the International Joint Commission that would be the end of it. A very strange thing happened. The 1971 terms of reference that the governments of Canada and the United States agreed to in putting the matter back before the International Joint Commission contained these strange and sinister words:

The International Joint Commission . . . to report on the nature, scope and impact of these consequences; and to make such recommendations, not inconsistent with the commission's order of approval dated January 27, 1942, and the related Agreement dated January 10, 1967, between the city of Seattle and the province of British Columbia as the commission may deem appropriate for the protection and enhancement of the environment—

The effect of that was that the International Joint Commission, by virtue of its terms of reference, did not have the power of jurisdiction to say no to the flooding. Let no one in this House fail to remember or to take into account the intense disappointment of thousands of citizens in Vancouver who realized that these hearings, no matter how they ended up, could not result, from the terms of reference, in the IJC saying no.

I have asked, as have other people, why the government of Canada agreed to these limited terms of reference. There may be reasons which justify these limited terms, but the fact is that they were limited and, as a consequence, the International Joint Commission brought out its report. While it could not say no, the report went so far toward saying no that headlines sprung up in papers across the country to the effect that the Skagit was saved by the IJC report. The fact of the matter is that there was a lot of optimism but that optimism was ill-founded. This matter was tabled in the House of Commons when the IJC report came out and there was a commitment by the Minister of the Environment at that time to study the matter and bring a report back to the House. So far that report has never been made to the House.

Let me go back to one incident at the hearing before the International Joint Commission. This is significant in that it refers to the legal point of which not enough has been made. I refer to the legal argument presented on behalf of the citizens who opposed the flooding, to the effect that the 1942 order was invalid and, as a consequence, the 1967 agreement was invalid. For some strange and incredible reason which I do not understand, which is completely and utterly beyond me and beyond other people there at the time, the representative of the Canadian government made this statement after the legal arguments before the IJC were closed. This statement was made by a representative of the government of Canada who was doing everything possible to stop this flooding, and I quote from page 130 of the transcript:

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—the government of Canada has treated the 1942 order and the 1967 agreement as perfectly sound legal documents and this has been our posture and I think that speaks for itself.

At this point we have the government saying it wants to stop the flooding, and we have arguments presented that could be used to stop it, yet we have a representative of the government of Canada saying that the government thinks these are legal documents. If any member of this House does not know how discouraging it is, when you are involved in a citizens' group fighting for something, to hear somebody from your own government shooting you down before the United States government, let him be faced with that sort of thing. This is one example of what we have had to fight against. There seems to have been an unexplained lack of co-ordination.

To bring the matter up to date, we now have been told by the Minister of the Environment that the Skagit is a dead issue. In fact, there was a press conference held in the fall by Premier Barrett and the Minister of the Environment wherein the Minister of the Environment assured us that if the province of British Columbia did not want the flooding to take place, it would not happen. He said:

Really, it is all over. When the government of British Columbia, who owns the valley, says the valley is not going to be flooded it's just a matter of Seattle City Light getting the message loud and clear—

Again the news headlines suggested that the valley was saved. Curiously enough, on February 6 when had occasion to raise the matter in this House and I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs what was happening, he said, as reported at page 1000 of *Hansard* for that date:

Mr. Speaker, we have made our representations to the United States government which I believe is quite happy to discuss them with us. The outstanding issue at the moment is not the question of the flooding but the question of the cost, and this is what we are discussing at present.

That was a curious reply I say, with respect, to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. How can we be discussing costs if the United States is still going ahead with the flooding? On January 29 of this year, Seattle City Light filed its brief with the United States Federal Power Commission and is proceeding with its application before that commission. Unless we do something or get some agreement with the United States, that commission will make the final determination as to whether a Canadian valley is flooded.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs was asked on February 6 what he meant by his answer in the House. I say gently, that is a good question. This is what he said to a radio news reporter, Mr. Doug Taylor, of CKWX:

There is nobody believes now that the . . . Skagit Valley will be flooded. And that is why my colleague the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Davis, said, "The Flooding of the Skagit is a dead issue". What we are talking about now is . . . who is to pay the costs that have been incurred . . . so this is what we're talking to the American government about. I agree with my colleague the Minister of Environment, that the flooding of the Skagit is a dead issue.

If this is a dead issue, I wonder why a letter of December 18 from Seattle City Light to the mayor of the city of Seattle said this:

The Canadians apparently deem it sound strategy to make strident but unofficial press statements, and studiously refrain from any legislative action affecting Ross on either the federal or provincial level.