

Supply—Northern Affairs

making the investigation for the international joint commission, and for which we are supplying the funds.

Mr. Green: Then we can take it from the minister that, so far as the dominion government is concerned, it does not expect there will be any actual power development on the Columbia river until these investigations have been completed, and the international joint commission has had the opportunity to decide what it will permit. Is that correct?

Mr. Lesage: Not exactly. There might be some interim report from the international joint commission which at a certain time might say, "Here is a dam site where we know power could be developed at the present time without any danger of upsetting the general plan. We know that this would be an individually operated site." That may be one of the conclusions in connection with which General McNaughton might have mentioned the Mica dam; I do not know about that. There might be some individual development of dam sites. However, up to now there is nothing definite, and the general picture is the one I mentioned a few moments ago.

Mr. Green: These investigations are being made, as I understand it, by engineers in the minister's own department. Apparently they have not reported anything to him about the Mica dam site, have they?

Mr. Lesage: They have reported some of the possibilities to me.

Mr. Green: Have they reported to the minister any actual plan for the development of power at that or any other site on the Columbia river in Canada?

Mr. Lesage: I am informed now by one of the engineers that a plan is being obtained from an engineering company for the possible development of that dam site.

Mr. Green: Under whose auspices is that plan being obtained? Is it the dominion, the provincial government or a private corporation that is paying for it?

Mr. Lesage: It is paid out of funds that the government provides for the international joint commission investigation.

Mr. Green: The dominion government is getting a report from some outside engineering company. Is that right?

Mr. Lesage: No. The international joint commission is. It is the engineering board that is getting it for the international joint commission.

Mr. Green: What is that?

[Mr. Lesage.]

Mr. Lesage: The engineering board which has been set up by the international joint commission to make the investigations which have been going on since 1944.

Mr. Green: Does that mean that in all probability this development at Mica creek will be undertaken fairly soon?

Mr. Lesage: I cannot say. There is no reason to assume that at the moment. I do not know. The international joint commission will have to look at the plans. The engineering board will have to look at the plans which will be supplied before making any recommendation to the international joint commission, and then the international joint commission will have to make a recommendation to us.

Mr. Green: Has the international joint commission any jurisdiction over the Columbia river at Mica creek? The river does not flow into the United States for several hundred miles from that point, and I wonder what right the United States would have to a voice in the construction of a dam in Canadian territory at Mica creek.

Mr. Lesage: I shall make it quite clear, I hope. The two governments have asked the international joint commission to make a study of the possible power development on the whole Columbia river.

Mr. Herridge: The United States government and the government of Canada.

Mr. Lesage: Yes, the United States and Canadian governments. The international joint commission has asked the board of engineers to make a field investigation, to prepare a report and to submit it to the international joint commission; but of course that does not take away from the provincial government of British Columbia its jurisdiction over natural resources, and of course water power is a natural resource of British Columbia.

Now, if the government of British Columbia wishes to develop some power on that part of the Columbia river, which would not affect the rights of the United States on their part of the river, there is no reason why that could not go on.

Mr. Green: Just in the same way that the United States constructed great dams on the Columbia river below the United States border, I presume?

Mr. Lesage: Exactly. The study that is being made does not change the jurisdiction at all.