

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

by war, international agreements were influenced almost entirely by the requirements of the day, with little or no thought of ecological problems, environmental requisites, etc. The arrangement at that time did receive the blessing of the International Joint Commission, a body charged with the responsibility of approving international agreements. In 1955, some 10 years following the end of the war, the federal government in its wisdom realized that the possibility of exploitation of Canadian river resources to the detriment of Canadian requirements was a real possibility and enacted the International Rivers Improvements Act. This act was designed to provide protection against the possibility of provincial governments entering into international agreements relating to exploitation of our Canadian water resources without due consideration to Canadian policy and Canadian needs.

It is therefore incumbent upon this House of Commons to exert every power within our jurisdiction to assure Canadians in general and British Columbians in this case in particular that the government of British Columbia is acting and operating at the present time in the interests of the people of Canada in relation to the proposed plans for the flooding of the beautiful Skagit valley.

In 1967 an agreement was signed between the province of British Columbia and the city of Seattle to flood the Canadian portion of the High Ross reservoir site. Apart from normal requirements relating to removal of debris, and so on, the compensation to be paid to the province of British Columbia by the city of Seattle department of lighting is \$34,566.21 per annum. This amounts to \$5.50 per acre per year which is equal to two Christmas trees per acre per year.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Pringle: The figures issued by the city of Seattle indicate that the net saving per year to the city amounts to \$1 million compared with the next cheapest source of power. So we relate some \$34,000 to \$1 million and we feel the economics are not exactly what we would expect them to be, having in mind the past history of the province of British Columbia. It is possible that the compensation was arranged many years ago, but it is unreasonable to conceive that the puny amount of \$35,000 could be acceptable at the present time.

I hold in my hand a number of telegrams, petitions and letters from interested Canadi-

ans who deplore the possibility of flooding the Skagit valley. Different people have different values, but all people respect each other's views. It is the view of many that we would not only be selling a valuable resource for a pittance but would be depriving generations of Canadians of the use of a recreational resource replaced by a limited one. This is not a backpack type area. Access is easy now. Some thousands of families use the Skagit for stream fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, enjoying the scenery and lake fishing on Ross Lake as it is today. One reason Ross Lake, which is the lake in question, is now popular is the quality of the fish. Ross Lake does not depend on artificial stocking; the fish are native fish.

Let me quote the Washington State Department of Game. That department states that these are strictly native fish, that they are robust and chunky and that the meat is a deep red. It is stated further that if the dam is raised and the spawning areas are wiped out, it then may be impossible to duplicate this fine rainbow through hatchery breeding. The Ross Lake fishery, like most other lakes in the States does not depend on artificial stocking and the new lake level will flood out major spawning areas along creeks that flow into the lake—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I must remind the hon. member that his time has expired, and I call upon the Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. J. A. Jerome (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the flooding of the Skagit River valley which has been threatened was authorized under an order of the International Joint Commission dated January 19, 1942. This order was granted after a public hearing to permit opponents to the scheme to make submissions to the International Joint Commission. I am advised that there was no public interest in the hearing and that no opposition was offered to the proposed flooding, which is understandable 30 years ago when the Skagit River valley was almost inaccessible and, to the best of my information, no private land owners were involved.

However, in the past 30 years no action has been taken on the International Joint Commission order and in the course of those years a very considerable change in circumstances has occurred. The Skagit River valley is now accessible by road and because of its proximity to Vancouver, which is rapidly developing