

Columbia River Agreement Signed

construction can begin. If Premier Bennett had carried out the arrangements he made through Mr. Williston before the treaty was signed, this project would have been under way long since. He scuppered it and made it impossible to proceed without delay with the project as we had hoped. If the original policy had been followed as between Canada, the United States and British Columbia the deals now being made would not have been necessary. Actual construction, with all its consequent advantages in terms of 31 million man hours of employment and the benefits of an immediate supply of low cost power, would now be accruing to the people of British Columbia.

Mr. Bert Leboe (Cariboo): Mr. Speaker, we are very glad indeed that the time has come when we are able to receive the report which we have just received from the Secretary of State for External Affairs on this very important question. The two men who were mentioned in the report, Mr. Williston and the premier of British Columbia, I think it can be said without a doubt are outstanding men in Canada today and are recognized as such. I hear murmurings from hon. members in the official opposition, and well might they murmur in view of the results they produced over the last few years in connection with this treaty.

The people of British Columbia are going to welcome this announcement. I should like to say in connection with the announcement and some of the remarks made by the leader of the official opposition, that the people are looking for action in this matter, and when it comes to playing politics I think it can be readily said and understood by most people in British Columbia, and in fact in other parts of Canada, that they know very well where the politics were being played in this connection.

Mr. Peters: We sure do.

Mr. Leboe: The hon. gentleman who left the House of Commons, who was removed from a negotiation post, has not gone unnoticed by the people of Canada, certainly not by the people of British Columbia. We are pleased to note from the statement that was made today and from statements made previously that the changes to the treaty itself are going to be of a minor nature. We are all aware of the statement made by the minister in connection with the sale of downstream benefits, and I think this is the important point which has to be considered. As a matter of fact it is the important point. If we are going to have a proper price range for the downstream benefits, surely this has to be negotiated to the best advantage of

Canadians and the people of British Columbia. Therefore I have every confidence, as I think hon. members generally have, in Mr. Williston's ability and also that of the premier of British Columbia in this connection.

As far as the final chapter of this Columbia river treaty is concerned, and its writing, we expect that there will be action taken very shortly in connection with the negotiations with the United States.

I should just like to say in closing that while we talk of great delays in the development of the Columbia river, those who are equipped with the facts know that the Columbia river development has been going on and is still going on, and there has been very little time actually lost through this because of the fact that the British Columbia government has had faith that the proposition would finally reach the stage where the nine or ten million dollars which has been invested will be returned to them in due course.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak as a Canadian with a completely non-partisan approach to this very important question. This most important statement just made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs is without a doubt the result of the influence of a genial political engineer who is anxious whenever possible to sooth President Kennedy's feelings, and that master of financial, economic and resource manipulation, the premier of British Columbia, whose policy throughout the years has clearly been demonstrated to be one of discounting the future of British Columbia for the political needs of the present.

One must tread rather lightly, Mr. Speaker, when dealing with a read statement. From long experience I find that when listening to the Secretary of State for External Affairs one should not be too definitive until one has had an opportunity to read what he has said, because he makes the impossible appear to be possible by the manner of his delivery, his voice and so on. However, from listening to the Secretary of State for External Affairs I judge that there is little change in the terms of the present treaty. It is purely a question of minor changes, which is what we and many other people had feared. However, I thank the minister for tabling the agreement between the federal government and the government of British Columbia. People will have an opportunity to see what it is.

I presume from what I heard the minister say that this government now considers it has passed the ball back to the premier of British Columbia. It is up to him to get the five mills he said he would get from the United States, and it is up to him to raise the money. I noticed also that the minister