

Supply—Northern Affairs

shipped up to \$67,000 worth of fruit annually off that land. This is some of the most valuable land we have in British Columbia, yet the government proposes to flood it.

People in the area concerned consider this is entirely unnecessary. I could go on at great length about this, but representations with respect to the economic, sociological and other effects of this proposal will be presented by a delegation which will be coming from the ridings of Kootenay West and Okanagan-Revelstoke when the external affairs committee is considering the treaty. I would ask hon. members to give this matter serious consideration, remembering that once this flooding is done it is done for all time. We believe the proposal requires far more consideration than has so far been given to it, by members of parliament.

Mr. Henderson: Might I suggest to both the hon. member who was just spoken and the premier of British Columbia that they should do their best to hasten the Peace river project. The Peace river is a natural source of power development. This development has been held back because of uncertainty about the development of the Columbia river. Let us go ahead and have this Peace river project, and never mind the Kootenays. Nobody will be flooded out when the Peace river project goes forward. Certainly it is the most beneficial project we could undertake in British Columbia or in North America.

Mr. Leduc: I have followed this discussion with great interest. I have taken a special interest in this subject since I was advised that the development of the Columbia river would not be in the best interests of British Columbia.

During the recess I was fortunate enough to be able to take a trip to Vancouver. One evening I met an engineer who is working on the Peace river hydro project. He had a film. He asked me if I was interested, and he showed me the film. After discussing this matter for hours I could easily understand the position which the premier of British Columbia is taking. This engineer proved to me that for the same amount of money, or possibly less, more electricity could be produced if the province of British Columbia would promote the development of the northern section and still permit the province to sell electricity to the United States if it were needed.

I feel that British Columbia would be better off if it concentrated on the Peace river development because the flooded area to be created would not displace one single family. It would be the largest hydroelectric project and the largest dam in the world. So far as employment is concerned, it would

[Mr. Herridge.]

provide just as much as, or possibly more than, would be provided by the Columbia development, and it would lie entirely within the province of British Columbia. That province would therefore have the full benefit of all the money invested.

For these reasons I believe British Columbia is very wise in continuing its studies of this subject. If they are not convinced that the Columbia river project is the most beneficial one for them, I believe they have every right not to agree to the treaty, because the province is not committed in writing. Its representatives have taken part in the discussions in order to obtain more information, and now that they possess this information I believe the province should not be forced to approve an agreement which would not provide the greatest possible benefit for the residents of British Columbia.

Mr. Hanbidge: Now that we have the Columbia river matter settled I want to introduce into this discussion a subject which is not controversial. I think this is the proper item under which to raise it. It has to do with the Red Deer river diversion in northern Alberta. My hon. friend the member for Red Deer and my hon. friend from Acadia in Alberta are much more familiar with this project than I am, but we in western Saskatchewan are particularly interested in it. I had hoped to bring up the question under the estimates of the Minister of Agriculture when the committee was dealing with P.F.R.A., but unfortunately I was not present when those estimates were considered.

The Red Deer river rises at a considerable distance to the southwest of the city of Red Deer, and for a great many years engineers have considered the possibility of using the waters from the Red Deer river, not for irrigation but for the benefit of stockmen and municipalities in the eastern part of Alberta and the western part of Saskatchewan.

Last August, after the house adjourned, I had the privilege of attending a meeting of chambers of commerce at a place called Consort in the constituency of the hon. member for Acadia. That meeting was attended by 300 or 400 people from Alberta and western Saskatchewan. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss this Red Deer river diversion plan, which is better known as the William Pearce plan. William Pearce was an engineer employed by one of the railway companies. It was he who worked on this plan and developed it, together with the specifications, in connection with this diversion for a great many years.

The meeting was attended by officials and engineers of the department of water resources of the province of Alberta and was