

Supply

United States made its application, that country was not yet at war though it was to be soon. The Skagit was relatively isolated. There was no environmental input at the hearing. In fact, the game commissioner for the province of British Columbia turned up only because the game commissioner for the state of Washington had said to him, "George, they are going to flood your valley; you had better get down here and see what damage it is going to do".

As I say, this order was made in 1942 and it is important to note that the order probably is legally invalid because, contrary to article 8 of the treaty, the International Joint Commission did a strange thing: it delegated to the city of Seattle and the province of British Columbia the right to work out the terms of compensation. That is completely contrary to the duty of the commission under the treaty. I stress the aspect of legality because this is a very powerful weapon in the hands of Canada in dealing with this particular matter, one that has not been effectively used by this country.

To continue the chronology, in the early fifties negotiations between the City of Seattle Light and Power and the province of British Columbia were continued. I do not want to take too long on the subject, but finally in 1967 an agreement was entered into, apparently pursuant to the order of 1942. This 1967 agreement was entered into between the province of British Columbia and the city of Seattle and it provided that the province of British Columbia would agree to allow the valley to be flooded for an annual payment of \$3,500 a year. So Seattle, in their estimate, gained at that time an advantage in terms of power of \$1 million a year, and there are documents today that show they have upped the figure to \$2 million a year.

Under article 8 of the treaty, the commission is charged with the duty of ensuring that adequate and suitable compensation is made as "approved by it". The point I am making is this. I realize the International Joint Commission is important in our relations with our American friends, and I am very aware of the sensibilities of a great many people in this city if anyone were to suggest that the International Joint Commission did not do everything as well as it should or that it had made a mistake. But the fact is that in taking this action the commission delegated its authority, which it had no right to do, and in fact never approved the terms of that settlement. And is there any wonder? Who in their right minds would approve it? There is now no question that the International Joint Commission would say to the Canadian people or any other people that that sum was suitable and adequate compensation for the loss of a valley.

It took some time for the public to realize what was going on and agitation began originally in the city of Vancouver. The former Liberal member for Fraser Valley East raised the matter in the House of Commons on October 6, 1970, as reported at page 8855 of *Hansard*, and this is what he said:

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...

[Mr. Fraser.]

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.

Then the hon. member worked it out and said that this amounted to \$5.50 per acre per year, which is equal to two Christmas trees per acre per year. That, Mr. Chairman, is what we gave away. One can say that the province of British Columbia gave it away, and that is true. But what I am saying is that the International Joint Commission is a child of the treaty that was entered into between the government of Canada and the government of the United States, and it is therefore our responsibility in this House to make sure that this giveaway does not happen.

The Minister of the Environment—I will be most generous in what I say—immediately recognized the seriousness of this problem and began to take steps to see what could be done about it. On October 10, 1970, he issued a statement. Part of the statement reads as follows:

The International Joint Commission had a great deal of faith in the B.C. government, too much faith perhaps. It left the Skagit to our provincial authorities to look after. Victoria was to look after the Canadian interest. Victoria was to look after the writing of a contract with the Seattle City Light Company in the U.S.A.

That is an admission that the Minister of the Environment recognized that a mistake had been made, that a potential legal invalidity lay in the order that allowed Victoria to settle with Seattle as to terms. Then the minister made this commitment:

All I can tell you this morning is that we in Ottawa are taking our responsibilities seriously. We are going to do something with the hot potato which Premier Bennett has tossed our way. As a starter we'll open up the Skagit issue for public discussion right here in B.C.

The Prime Minister was next to get into the act. On November 25, 1970, in *The Province* the right hon. gentleman is quoted as saying:

The best way—

That is, to end the threat of flooding.

—would be to do it yourself—get rid of Bennett.

Let me inform those hon. members whose knowledge of the beautiful province of British Columbia is limited that the "Bennett" referred to is the former premier, the Hon. W. A. C. Bennett who until recently was premier of the province. For better or for worse, the people of British Columbia did get rid of Mr. Bennett but this, contrary to the hopes expressed by the Prime Minister, has not resulted in the going away of the threat of the flooding of this valley.

• (1740)

I should say, also, that hon. members of all parties have supported the opposition to this flooding. As far as the government party is concerned, I want to make sure that hon. members on that side know full well how hard a certain member of the legislative assembly of the province of British Columbia, a member of the Liberal party, has worked on this matter. I pay tribute here to Mr. David Brousson, the member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia who has as much as any man led the fight to save this valley for the whole of the country. I think hon. members on the government benches should be aware of that fact because it has been the Liberal party in