

in my view they could do nothing but what they did. And if a loss ultimately falls upon the Dominion of Canada here are the birds, over here in this left hand corner, who will be largely responsible.

Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for Melville (Mr. Motherwell), I have not received any invitation to express my views either on behalf of the government or on behalf of those who have engineered the debate. Like my hon. friend, also, I think it is rather interesting, in view of recent developments, to read the statements and allegations which on different occasions in the past were made by the right hon. leader of the government (Mr. Bennett) and some of his associates. However at this time I do not wish to refer to those statements. I do not wish, either, to express any view as to which interest should control the Beauharnois company in its present difficulties. I do not believe that this is the proper tribunal before which the matter should be discussed, until a decision is reached.

My purpose in rising however is to refer to one or two matters to which allusions were made by the hon. members for Bow River (Mr. Garland) and Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) and, to a lesser degree, by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Gardiner). They referred to the advisability and advantages of public ownership of public utilities. In some respects I would agree with them. I have had the privilege of representing the Quebec city council before the legislature on two occasions with regard to the municipalization of electricity. And after the consideration of that matter and the studies connected therewith I do not hesitate to state that compared with the rates paid by people in Ontario the people of my province pay too high a rate for electric lighting and electricity for different uses.

Mr. CHAPLIN: The people in Montreal say they get it cheaper than we do in Ontario.

Mr. LAPOINTE: They are wrong about it.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Yes, they are very wrong.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I agree with the hon. member that they are wrong.

Mr. CHAPLIN: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. LAPOINTE: But I think that is a matter which should be discussed in the province of Quebec by the province of Quebec. And no matter how pleased I may

be that some of my friends in the corner share my views in regard to certain matters, I really do not invite their collaboration on something which is really a provincial matter of the province of Quebec. I do not believe that by intruding themselves in the discussion of this matter they will help at all its solution.

Hon. members say that the development of the St. Lawrence river is national in its scope, and that as a result of that line of reasoning the power belongs to the people of Canada. I should like to refer to one mistake which was certainly made by the hon. member for Bow River, who in this was supported by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. Let me tell those hon. gentlemen that at the time of confederation the legislative powers were divided, and set out in sections 91 and 92 of the British North America Act, the residue of powers being left with the Dominion of Canada. But not only were the legislative powers divided at that time, but assets and properties were divided. In that instance, instead of the residue being left to the dominion it remained in the hands of the provinces. Properties which were transferred to the Dominion government are all enumerated in the British North America Act. And when hon. members mention canals and waterpowers connected with them, they must bear in mind that the expression applies to canals then existing and to waterpowers then existing. Nobody can contradict that statement before the courts, and it is a principle accepted by all authorities. The same applies to harbour and lake improvements. In connection with a case only a few years ago in which the harbour commission of Montreal was involved, the privy council decided that the bed of the river, which was not then part of the harbour of Montreal, had not been transferred, was still provincial property, belonged to the grantee of the property, and had to be paid for by the harbour commissioners of Montreal in the event of their wanting to use it.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Was not the contrary position taken by Mr. Cannon and others who represented the Dominion government?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Could my hon. friend expect otherwise? Mr. Cannon was presenting the case for the federal authorities and against the provincial authorities. He had to argue the best he could on the side of the federal government, but what creates the authority is not the argument of Mr. Cannon, nor that of Mr. Geoffrion, or Mr. Lafleur who were on the other side, but the decision given by the supreme court of Canada. I would be