

Supply—Northern Affairs

Mr. Lesage: Five years, counting the present one.

Mr. Herridge: Before the report is completed?

Mr. Lesage: I should say four, after the present year.

Mr. Herridge: Thank you. What steps are taken after the report is completed by those conducting the investigation? What is the next step in the development of this area?

Mr. Lesage: I believe we will look at the report first before taking the next step.

Mr. Herridge: Who considers the report and then makes a recommendation?

Mr. Lesage: The report of the engineers will be made to the international joint commission, which will report to both governments.

Mr. Green: In recent months there has been a great deal of publicity in British Columbia concerning the possibility of a power development at Mica creek on the big bend of the Columbia river. Discussion was commenced, I believe, because of statements made by General McNaughton, who is chairman of the Canadian section of the international joint commission. Can the minister tell us just what there is in all this publicity? Some of the dispatches would lead one to believe that a huge dam would be built there within a matter of the next year or two, and that there would be power for the whole of the interior of British Columbia, as well as some arrangement whereby power would go to the state of Washington.

It does seem to me either that those dispatches are very much exaggerated or that the minister is wrong in stating tonight that it will be several years before a report comes in, and then several more years before anything is done about it. We can almost see that dam going up right now in British Columbia; and it is a very important project. It may mean the settling of hundreds of thousands of people in the interior of the province. I would like to have a more definite statement from the minister as to just what is in contemplation. The department must know a great deal more than he has told us.

Mr. Herridge: Before the minister replies may I supplement the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, because I was going to ask a question along the same lines as that asked by the hon. member. I must say that I am confused by the minister's answer when compared with the published statements of various members of the government of British Columbia.

As the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra has said, one of the ministers in that government announced publicly that the Mica dam is to be commenced within eighteen months. The minister of lands and forests last week, in addressing the city council of Trail, announced that he had given the green light to the Kaiser Corporation of the United States to commence building a dam at Castlegar.

Mr. Lesage: Who said that?

Mr. Herridge: The minister of lands and forests in the government of British Columbia. And at the present time a surveyor and engineer of the Kaiser Corporation are now in the area of the Arrow lakes making surveys. According to the *Trail Times* I received this morning, these surveys are being made in connection with the dam for which, according to the minister of lands and forests in the government of British Columbia, the company has received the green light. As the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra has said, we find this very confusing.

Mr. Lesage: Of course it is not up to me to explain the declarations and statements of ministers of the present British Columbia government. That would be asking a bit too much of me. The only thing I know is that field investigations are taking place on the Columbia river. It is an international river. A reference has been made by the government of Canada and the government of the United States to the international joint commission. That body has appointed a board of engineers, and some of the engineers of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources are on that board of engineers. They are working to prepare a report, and the field investigations will not be terminated before two years have expired. It will then take two years to complete the office work, and the preparation of the final report.

It might very well be that someone might say that Mica dam would have a capacity of so many horsepower. That could be said by someone who might know. But Mica dam is only one of the possible dam sites. What the international joint commission expects is a comprehensive report of all the power possibilities of the Columbia river.

Now, as to the concurrent work that might be done on a permit from the British Columbia government—what the hon. member has said is quite possible. I am not informed in the matter. The only thing about which I am informed is the progress and the work of the board of engineers who are