

Columbia River Agreement Signed

them, the treaty itself and agreement with British Columbia will then be submitted to parliament for its consideration.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the agreement, in French and English, for the information of the house.

Mr. J. A. Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether it would meet the wishes of the house, for the convenience of the house and the public, if this agreement were printed in *Hansard*?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Editor's note: for text of document referred to above, see appendix "A".*]

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is naturally very difficult to follow a detailed statement such as the house has just listened to, but certain general remarks can be made. It will have been noticed that the minister emphasized the fact that the sale of downstream benefits is to be subject to securing appropriate terms. Near the end of his remarks the minister again referred to the fact that everything in connection with this agreement is dependant upon the attainment of terms that are mutually satisfactory.

It is clear therefore from what the minister has said that the agreement entered into, while I have not had an opportunity of perusing it, covers mainly the details of operation and the contractual position as between Canada and British Columbia regarding the discharge of Canada's obligations under the treaty. It should be emphasized that the whole problem is still in an uncertain state. While an agreement has been entered into between British Columbia and the government of the Dominion of Canada there are, in fact, matters of detail which will have to be implemented after being determined.

Mention was made of the fact that the treaty was signed on January 17, 1961. I would bring to the attention of the house the fact that when that treaty was signed there was agreement as between the government of British Columbia and the government of Canada. We signed the treaty on the basis of the arrangements that had been agreed to between the governments of Canada and the province of British Columbia and it was only after the treaty was signed that Premier Bennett of British Columbia determined on a course different from that to which he had earlier agreed through his representative, Hon. Ray Williston.

It is quite apparent from what has been said that the treaty cannot be implemented unless there is a further protocol entered into with the United States. As the minister spoke

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

I was impressed by the fact that although he said an agreement had been arrived at, what he said stayed far away from saying that a final agreement had been reached, for there are many terms or changes which will have to be agreed to.

Final agreement with United States will have to cover the terms and conditions of the sale of Canada's share of Columbia power which the treaty secures and which, were it not for this new policy, would be available for use in British Columbia. Indeed, one of the major objectives of the treaty was that downstream benefits would be so much cheaper than power produced elsewhere that a major portion thereof would be returned to British Columbia in the interests of the development of industry within that province.

I think the house and the country should be advised now as to what the position of the government would be with regard to the price to be obtained. There is delightful uncertainty in this regard in the statement made by the minister. There should be also information as to the period during which Canada will forgo its entitlement, and the provisions which have been made for recapture. The house should also be advised at once of the precise nature of any changes in the provisions of the treaty to which the government is prepared to agree in its negotiations with the United States. If the changes are of such insignificance that they would not be submitted to the United States Senate we can only conclude that they are lacking in substance.

We are entitled to an immediate estimate of the time which will elapse before ratification can be effected and construction can begin. Until this information is made available to us no one, I am sure, could possibly express any final opinion on the deal which has been made. What can be said is that great care will have to be exercised to ensure that the real interest, the economic interest, in Canada's future destiny, as well as that of British Columbia in obtaining an abundant flow of low cost power, is not being bartered away for immediate political advantage.

This is one of those things to which reference was made by the Prime Minister during the election campaign. He was going to renegotiate the treaty with the United States. What we have now is far removed from a renegotiation of the treaty. What the government is now contemplating are some additional clauses which may be embodied in a protocol, rather than a renegotiation of the treaty itself. The course now being followed—and I think this can be said without fear of controversy—at Mr. Bennett's insistence means a lengthy delay before the treaty can be implemented and