

*Lake of the Woods Control Board*

I intend to read it in order to put it into the records of the house. It is as follows:

To regulate and control the flow of waters into lac Seul through the lake St. Joseph diversion works when the level of lac Seul rises above the following elevations in any year, namely, 1168 feet in the period commencing the 1st day of February and ending the 31st day of May, 1170 feet in the period commencing the 1st day of July and ending the 31st day of December and 1169 feet in the months of January and June.

These levels are the levels on lac Seul and are, therefore, under the direction and control of the Canadian section of the Lake of the Woods control board. But as I said earlier, when the water level of the Lake of the Woods rises above a certain point control goes to the international board. I think these are the significant things in the amendment.

I might say a word or two about the proportion of the members on the board. Traditionally there have always been two federal members and two from Ontario. However, as the house may recall, in 1930 Manitoba won back control of its natural resources, but we continued to administer the levels of storage in the Lake of the Woods area even though this did affect the resources of Manitoba. It is only common justice we are doing now in giving Manitoba a voice on that board. We certainly have to maintain our voice in order to protect our international interest and, naturally, Ontario, with most of the water in its area, has the right to two members. Both in Manitoba and Ontario, the provincial legislatures have in their latest sessions, passed legislation similar to this in order to make the composition of this new board possible.

**Mr. W. M. Benidickson (Kenora-Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, without wishing to hold up the house, I think it would be appropriate for me, as representing the area which chiefly supplies this watershed to which the minister has referred, to say a few words.

I am sure it gives the minister a great deal of satisfaction to introduce this bill and to speak to it in the very informed manner in which he has, because while he showed modesty in not telling the house that he was born within this domain I am sure it is a matter of pride to him that this was the case. It was also pleasant that while we were discussing this subject the hon. member who is my deskmate should have remarked to me that we were discussing here the most wonderful inland waterway in the world. I am quoting the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate (Mr. Pickersgill) who reminds me that he first became acquainted with this area two years after the Lake of the Woods Control Board Act had been introduced in this house.

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle).]

**Mr. Brooks:** And he comes from Manitoba, of course.

**Mr. Benidickson:** And he comes from Manitoba as did I. One cannot, of course, in any way feel that the new composition of the board is not a desirable one, irrespective of the birthplace of either the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate or myself. Our neighbours to the west, in Manitoba, have a great interest in the water levels in the area.

During the committee stage I should like to ask the minister a question or two, because although he is new in the department I am sure he has already informed himself on all these matters. I would point out that there did occur in the Lake of the Woods area in 1950 a certain amount of dissatisfaction which was never cleared up with respect to flooding which occurred in that year. I should like to find out, during the committee stage, to what extent people who have land rights on the lakes which have been referred to will be protected irrespective of the change in the composition of the board. I am of the opinion, and perhaps the minister when he speaks later on would indicate whether or not he agrees with me, that such people are perhaps better protected than they were before as a result of the diversion that was made possible last year providing to the power users in Manitoba via the Winnipeg river an alternative source of water flow by means of the diversion from lac St. Joseph and lac Seul. In other words, there would no longer be sole dependence on water-flow from the Lake of the Woods, and in consequence we might not have the same feeling, in the area where people reside, in Fort Frances and on the Rainy lake and in Kenora, and on the Lake of the Woods, and Minaki as we had in 1950, that because our waters were necessary to provide power further downstream in Manitoba the board might at times disregard residents' land and shore rights so far as water levels above are concerned.

I think that is all I am anxious to say at this stage; I have a few questions to ask on the sections of the bill.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Sevigny in the chair.

On clause 1—*Establishment of the board.*

**Mr. Benidickson:** Mr. Chairman, there are one or two questions I should like to address to the minister. Is he able to inform the committee as to the investment that was made in the canal and dam which provides the diversion from lac Seul? Secondly, as he informed the house, this bill had its first reading some weeks ago. I wonder whether