

South Saskatchewan River

ticipated in the by-election campaign was evidence that advocates of the project were making headway in winning converts in the east.

Mr. Martin: Growingly sympathetic.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am glad to have the sympathy of the hon. gentleman, but what the people in Saskatchewan want is not sympathy at election time but action in parliament. The right hon. Minister of Agriculture pointed out the benefits of this project on October 23, 1948, when he said:

If this part of the country could be turned into an industrial as well as an agricultural area, it would be possible for it to support twice the population that it does now. Cheap power is the "open sesame" to industrial growth. With a dam at its back door almost assured, and with the resultant cheap water power available in the not too distant future, Saskatoon stands at the gateway to new and unprecedented development.

So it went through the entire election campaign; what we of the Progressive Conservative party had advocated over the years as necessary for the development of Saskatchewan received the support of speakers on behalf of the government. It is of interest to note, sir, that the man who in 1938 placed the plan before this house for the development of this great project in Saskatchewan was none other than the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol).

The people of Saskatchewan would like to know when a decision will be made as to the location of the dam, and when the work will be proceeded with. Some three years ago the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) promised that the location of the dam would be finally determined during that coming summer, which was the summer of 1946. Speaking on April 27 of that year at a luncheon meeting of the board of trade which was attended by members of the South Saskatchewan River Development Association, as reported in the *Regina Leader-Post*, the right hon. gentleman stated:

The dominion government had already mapped out a program, and it was a program involving \$110 million. This would be used largely in providing for the storage of water and partly for the distribution of this water where needed.

The dominion government thus did not need the endorsement of the South Saskatchewan River Development Association to begin work on the South Saskatchewan river. It had already decided to go through with it.

Then he declared that some time that summer, the summer of 1946—

—a decision would be reached on where the dam on the South Saskatchewan should be placed. It would be on one of three sites between the elbow and Saskatoon.

As soon as the site had been finally decided upon, contracts would be let and work would proceed immediately.

That was three years ago. There have been some small votes since in connection with

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

this matter; but one outstanding feature of the speech from the throne is the omission of any reference to proceeding with this dam and the irrigation development connected therewith. I want the minister to realize that we on this side of the house will support him in anything he may do to get this work under way immediately. I know preliminary work must be done; but, sir, the promise in 1946 was that the work would be proceeded with, not the development work done. It was promised that the location of the dam would be decided in 1946. We in Saskatchewan today, irrespective of any political considerations, are demanding that the project be proceeded with now and particularly in view of the fact that this year we are facing one of the worst threats of disaster to confront us over a period of at least ten years, by reason of grasshopper infestation.

I am one of those who believe that the only way Canada can develop her natural resources is by the state giving leadership in providing opportunity for development, and allowing to the individual the actual expansion of that development. For the last five years we have had in power in Saskatchewan a socialist government which promised to develop our natural resources, and also promised that state ownership would furnish the necessary resources to provide greater social security. As I listened today to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) very properly bring to the attention of the house the injustice created by the present rates paid to old age pensioners my mind went back to 1944, when the socialist party in Saskatchewan promised that if it achieved power it would develop the natural resources of that province and that the profits would provide for social security on an expanded basis. As I listened to my hon. friend speak, and with much of what he said I am in agreement, one thought came to mind. Why is it that in such an experimental station as Saskatchewan, where a socialist government is in power which is able to increase the old age pension to \$50 a month, the social security measures advocated in this house have not been carried into effect? The socialist government of Saskatchewan promised to develop the natural resources under state ownership; but experience has shown that it cannot be done or at least it has not been done. In fact two businesses into which the government entered with high hopes and rosy promises closed down on December 20 last. The men employed in those businesses were thrown out of work, and according to records brought down in this house the other day a number of the men then dismissed are now living