

Department of Indian Affairs has responsibility under a number of acts.

In the past few years we have experienced across Canada some rather serious problems simply because the federal government has not initiated the proper development surveys, nor have the provincial governments, before certain projects have been commenced. I mentioned earlier the Bennett dam on the Peace River. Let me draw to the attention of the House that only a few years ago this dam was completed and the flood waters of the Peace River were stored behind it. Apparently Canadians at that time were not very interested in the effects of the dam on the downstream area. Now, a few years later, we find in the Athabasca and Mackenzie River deltas that very severe and adverse environmental effects have taken place.

Just the other day in the committee I was questioning one of the officials of the department about the effects of the dam on the Athabasca delta. He indicated in his answers that initially, there were 750,000 pair of nesting ducks which produced about 2 million ducks. The effect of the dam has been to cut this down to about 200,000 pair of nesting ducks and the over-all production of wild duck to just over one-half million. These are not all lost but it means that in many instances they have probably gone looking for other nesting places. This is a very serious matter. It affects the whole wildlife and ecology of that vast northern area.

• (1440)

Even the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) in a speech which he made several weeks ago outlined very ably the damage that has been done through man's neglect to take into consideration the over-all effects of damming these rivers. We are asking the very same thing about the James Bay area. What has been done?

We had a federal-provincial task force. They started in the middle of last year and produced a report on either February 2 or 3 of this year. However, the report is not based on any basic research for the simple reason they did not have time to do the research.

The report has generally indicated there will be no major dislocation as far as this project is concerned. In effect, they have given a green light to the James Bay Development Corporation to proceed. I repeat, this is based on no actual or effective research having been done on the effects which the damming of these rivers will have on not only the inhabitants of the area or the wildlife, but on the effect it will have on James Bay itself.

There have been warnings by one or two scientists who have indicated this could change the whole climate of that area. What effect will it have on the fish? For years our party has been urging that before major projects of this nature take place, full and proper ecological surveys should be made. This should be done before a project is announced, not after. Here it is 1972 and we find that this has not been done.

There is another question I wish to ask the ministers in charge. When the dams are built, about 4,000 acres will be flooded. I come from the area of the Columbia River project and I know what flooding can do. When the Duncan Dam was built, about 15 per cent of the area was

James Bay Power Project

cleared. It is a national disgrace to see the vast areas of the north end of Duncan Lake where there is a mass of floating debris, trees, stumps and sticks. Is the same thing going to happen in the province of Quebec? Is there provision in this agreement whereby these areas will be cleared so they will be recreational assets to the province in the future? As far as I know there is no provision for clearing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say a few words on the topic before the House. The James Bay development project is of major importance. Many Canadians live in that area, and have the right to live there, and according to some if that area is developed the very existence of those citizens will be jeopardized.

We must therefore seek justice; the government must protect citizens whose rights are threatened. If citizens live in that area and fulfil themselves there, it is our duty to study closely what their fate will be, especially if their right to life is being threatened. It may be that the whole situation will have to be studied before we find out whether or not those citizens' rights will be violated.

Mr. Speaker, there are collective rights which it behooves society to protect.

In our era of progress and abundance, we see the structures and institutions of peoples being totally transformed. This is accompanied by cultural, economic and social evolution. Those changes exert great influence on the political, intellectual and moral life of the community, particularly with regard to the rights and duties of the individual in the enjoyment of civil freedom and the pursuit of the common good, as well as the organization of relations between the citizens and the public authorities. The citizens of the James Bay area certainly need public powers to help them claim their rights.

Owing to the greater awareness of human conscience and dignity, efforts are being made, in various areas of the world, towards establishing a political-judicial order in which, in public life, the rights of the individual will be better protected. For instance, the guarantee of the right of free enterprise, the right to express personal opinions or profess a religion is a requisite for citizens, individually or in groups, to be able to take part in public life and the administration of public affairs in keeping with cultural, economic and social progress. Many people manifest the will to participate to a greater degree in the organization of the political and economic community, and many of these are becoming increasingly anxious to protect the rights of minorities within a nation.

Those involved are, I believe, some 4,000 citizens living in the James Bay area and they are certainly entitled to receive justice from the government, without thereby failing to carry out their obligations to the political community. Moreover, there is increasing respect for those who hold different opinions or practice a different religion. At the same time, there is more co-operation, whereby all citizens—and not only the privileged few—may truly enjoy human rights. It is evident that the citizens who live on