

Supply—Northern Affairs

Mr. Pickersgill: No, Dr. George Fairfield, Conservative member of parliament. It reads:

Premier Duff Roblin Friday accused Dr. George Fairfield, Conservative member of parliament for Portage-Neepawa with making "unwarranted and misleading" statements about the proposed Assiniboine river diversion.

Dr. Fairfield Thursday told the House of Commons that the diversion could end up as a \$12 million "flop." (See earlier story page 8).

I am not going to put that on the record.

In a sharp reply Friday, Premier Roblin said, "It is a matter of regret that Dr. Fairfield should make what I take to be an unwarranted and misleading statement.

"I must assume that he is not well informed about water control and conservation on the Assiniboine river.

"Ten years of study and the best counsel available in North America have gone into the water conservation plan now adopted by the Canadian and Manitoba governments.

"All this information is available to Dr. Fairfield any time he wishes to make use of it. As a professional man, I'm sure he will understand that our professional advisors have taken into full account the various problems involved in these projects."

Dr. Fairfield's attack on the project came only a day after agriculture minister—

That is the provincial minister—

—George Hutton had won approval for the floodway from a majority of members of the prairie flood control organization, which represents people of the area.

I think the house would be interested to know whether the minister is on the side of the premier or on the side of his colleague here in the house, and also what progress is being made in this controversial question.

Mr. Dinsdale: Actually this item, as the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate knows, comes under the purview of prairie farm rehabilitation, but I am quite happy to answer his question. Judging by the statement he has read from the *Winnipeg Free Press* there seems to be an honest difference of opinion between the two gentlemen to whom he has referred, and I think I could give the same answer to this query as I gave to the previous query concerning Niagara Falls, that this, I think, is as much a qualitative as it is a quantitative judgment. In so far as wanting to know which side I am on, I would say I am on the side of the angels.

Mr. Pickersgill: Could the minister tell us which side the angels are on, because I think a lot of people would like to know? Perhaps the minister could also give us a very brief progress report on the Red river floodway which I believe comes within the purview of his department. I do not want to hold the estimates up, but it would be interesting to know what progress is being made with this project, which was going to be started four or five years ago. We all recall

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

that when Premier Roblin took office in Winnipeg it was going to be done in no time; but now a long, long period has elapsed and there does not appear to be great progress made.

Mr. Dinsdale: So far as the Red river project is concerned this does come under the Canada Water Conservation Act.

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes, I wanted to be in order.

Mr. Dinsdale: I can appreciate that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Churchill: That is new.

Mr. Dinsdale: I have reported from time to time when the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has inquired solicitously about this matter. We are making very encouraging progress and the program is going to be under way this year. As a matter of fact, judging from the past performance of the former administration, it is about 20 years ahead of what might have been expected.

Mr. Pickersgill: I think I should thank the minister for the suggestion that the former administration was so aggressive that it would have gone on with the project before the need was manifest, since the great Winnipeg flood is not yet 20 years away. As the minister knows, at the time when Mr. Roblin was successful in becoming premier of Manitoba he assured the people that Dief and Duff were just "like this". I do not know how *Hansard* is going to interpret that, but it meant they were very close. They do not seem to be very close nowadays; but he said there would be no time lost before this project would be under way. Does the minister really think that before parliament is dissolved there will actually be a shovelful of earth taken out?

Mr. Dinsdale: Oh yes, Mr. Chairman. As a matter of fact there was some digging done last summer. Since the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate abandoned Manitoba for Newfoundland he has been out of touch with the situation in Manitoba. I know he was there during the 1930's when things were at a bad pass under the former Liberal government.

Mr. Pickersgill: No, under the Bennett government. The minister is too young to remember, but I do.

Mr. Dinsdale: Since Mr. Roblin and the Conservative administration took over there is a whole new situation. The atmosphere is one of progress and I am sure the hon. member would be delighted to see it if he would return home to Manitoba and pay a visit to us there.