

*Northern Inland Waters Bill*

the North are subject to a wide variety of rules, regulations and directives, many of which are definitely inconsistent. Northerners have long wanted a new water act which gives them a single water authority in each of our northern territories to carry out the total federal responsibility for northern water conservation. The bill does this by creating boards made up of the senior federal water conservation officials in each territory and officials from the territorial governments. When a board issues a licence, or sets water standards, all federal departments and the territorial governments are party to the decisions. Furthermore, co-ordination is built into the decision-making process.

The bill includes therefore provisions for the control of water quality, the issuance of licence for the use of water, co-ordination of government responsibilities regarding water and other aspects. Taken separately, these provisions deal with an important field of water conservation. As a whole the bill represents an effective mean of arriving at general planning of that important resource, the waters of the North.

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer afford to manage and develop our water resources in terms of single purpose planning. Water is a unique resource which is a vital constituent in the complete range of human activity.

Moreover, water does not respect political boundaries, private property or regions of influence.

This means that water planning and management can no longer be carried out in neat little compartments, one concerned with water power, one for industrial processes, one for domestic requirements, another for recreation and so on.

Water management today must be based on the concept of overall basin development. It must take into account all of the various uses and needs that the water resource will be expected to meet. What is done at point A on a particular stream will have an important effect on what can be done at point B on the same stream and the two must be considered together in planning river development.

This concept of overall planning is clearly reflected in the bill. There will be provisions which will govern exploitation of this resource according to the watershed line and other geographical particularities and there will be provisions for the issue of licences for the use of water during some defined periods in order to allow multipurpose planning and rational development. The bill permits agree-

[Mr. Chrétien.]

ments to be made with provincial governments for joint planning on those rivers and lakes that cross the boundary along the 60th parallel. The bill provides reserving land adjacent to important bodies of water to protect the water resources where this is deemed advisable.

[English]

This bill, Mr. Speaker, recognizes the requirements for water north of the sixtieth parallel, and ensures that it will be fully protected in the future.

The north will have increasing demand for water in the years ahead. Water will be needed for resource processing, industrial purposes and for hydro power. The bill protects water to meet these needs.

The economic life of much of the north and the tremendous oil exploration and drilling programs under way in the Mackenzie Valley and on the Alaska north slope are largely dependent on maintaining the quality of the water in the Mackenzie River System. The bill will protect this waterway.

The government has an obligation to protect the right to water of the indigenous people, since many of them depend on fishing and trapping animals whose habitat is the marshes, deltas, rivers and lakes of the north. Northern lakes and rivers are one of the main breeding grounds in North America for a wide variety of important bird species as well as being the home of a number of unique wild animals. This legislation will assist the Canadian Wildlife Service and other interested bodies in their efforts to protect the ecology in the north where the balance is more delicate than elsewhere. With the passage of this legislation, it is my firm belief that we will have all the tools we require for multipurpose planning and rational development of our northern water resources.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Finally, I would like to say a word on the relationship of the northern inland waters bill to the Canada water bill. As you know, the Canada water bill is intended to reflect the national interest in the protection and management of water resources throughout Canada. The Canada Water Act assumes that strong regional water authorities exist in the provinces and territories, and it is a means whereby the federal government can co-operate with provincial and territorial water authorities in the comprehensive planning and management process. The northern