

*Government Orders*

Peace River flows in a easterly direction and goes into Wood Buffalo National Park.

The Athabaska flows on the eastern boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park and the Peace flows right through the middle of it. There is a gigantic estuary there, one of the largest freshwater marine estuaries in the world. This is of critical interest to the government of the Northwest Territories and that is why it is critically interested in the outcome of the debate and the legislative process involving Bill C-51.

The water has slowed down because it is impounded in the Williston reservoir. The natural flood flows which ordinarily would come in the spring, in the coming months from now, would go in and flush a lot of the various small kinds of plants and bushes and so on out of the sedimented sands that are in this huge freshwater estuary and would create an enormously important part of the biosystem, not only for birds such as the whooping cranes but also for the bison.

The government has yet to seriously address this problem. When I speak about government I include the federal government but also both the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia and obviously the Northwest Territories because as the waters flow north from their point of joining at Wood Buffalo National Park they flow on up into the Northwest Territories where there are major lake systems such as Great Slave and other very large bodies of water.

One of the difficulties encountered by the duly democratically elected legislature of the Northwest Territories is that it has been unable to properly administer many of the issues affecting water, whether it is for water supply for communities or the disposal of various kinds of contaminants into water systems. In the Northwest Territories and Yukon, mining issues such as placer mining, need regulatory authority and enforcement authorities so that they can control the kinds of activities that affect their water supply. They need permitting structures and, in order to do that, they need legislation such as this.

There is serious interest among residents in the Northwest Territories to get transferred powers so that they can conduct the kind of work that historically has been done by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. As members can appreciate, it is a rather difficult job for the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs to conduct from Ottawa, to deal with all of the permitting and regulatory matters affecting the

Northwest Territories and, as we will find in the following debate, affecting Yukon.

The majority of the water movement in the Northwest Territories is either into Hudson Bay or on up into the Beaufort. I think most members of the House are aware of mighty rivers such as the Mackenzie and others that flow in a northerly direction up through the territories and into the Arctic or into Hudson Bay.

It being second reading of this legislation, I would like to take an opportunity to assist those who might be interested in reading this debate or who are watching this debate in terms of some of the definitions that are going to be provided in Bill C-51.

In the interpretation section, "board", for the purposes of this legislation, is going to mean the Northwest Territories Water Board as established in this act. What you can see is the intent of the legislation, in the interpretation section, to develop a more territorially based administrative system.

"Domestic user" means a person using waters for household requirements, for watering of domestic animals and so on. That, of course, would involve all of the residents of the N.W.T.

"Instream user" means a person using waters otherwise than so described. The licensing provisions are going to be transferred in a similar way to the Northwest Territories.

As I was saying earlier, it is one of the more difficult issues for a small government, because administratively the government of the Northwest Territories does not have a large bureaucracy in a contemporary sense when compared with the provinces or with the federal government and the major difficulties it is now starting to have to deal with, in many cases, come from the provinces.

We can look again to western Canada to problems being created for the Northwest Territories in terms of water quality and waste being discharged into systems like the Peace and the Athabaska from some of the major new pulp mills that are being constructed there. Many of those toxic contaminants move not just hundreds, but in some cases thousands of miles up these majestic and beautiful water systems.

Not only can these kinds of toxic contaminants be carried from other jurisdictions such as the provinces on up systems like the Peace and the Athabaska to contaminate major river and lake systems in the Northwest Territories, but fish species that move up and down these enormous water systems can pick up large amounts of the contaminants in their flesh near points of contamina-