

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has made a useful contribution in clearing up some points that have been concerning the general public. He has explained the study by the United States Army Corps of Engineers with respect to the formation and decay of ice in the northern lakes. The only comment I would make on that is I think it is a pity it was not done as a joint project rather than having the United States Army Corps of Engineers work on the Canadian side of the border.

He has also clarified the situation with respect to the survey of northern waters which is a joint project of the government of Canada and the Ontario government. We look forward to a full report at an early date.

So far as the Grand Canal project is concerned, apparently it is in an elementary discussion stage. I should like to say to the minister, however, that we in this party would be very much disconcerted if this project, in materializing, should be handled by a private company. A project as important as this ought to be undertaken by the government concerned. Otherwise the day is going to come when we will have to bail it out with government assistance, or we will find that control of the company has wandered across the line and a very important feature of Canadian economic life has been taken out of our hands.

The main reason that the minister made the statement is that he realizes the concern of the Canadian people with respect to our water resources, and justly so. Canadians are beginning to realize that water is one of our most important assets. Not only has domestic consumption of water increased but industrial consumption is increasing at a geometric rate. Increasingly, water will be required for irrigation projects in many parts of Canada. The time is coming, perhaps even within the lifetime of some members in this chamber, when water will be more important than some of the energy fuels we are seeking at the present time. Therefore Canadians are concerned lest we lose control of this valuable asset.

The situation has not been helped at all by the report of the Shultz cabinet committee in the United States or the statement of President Nixon last week or the setting up of the new United States committee under Mr. George Lincoln, all of which seem to indicate that a very refined form of blackmail is under way. In effect, the Canadian government is being told, "If you want to sell Canadian oil"—which we do—"in the United States the

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*quid pro quo* will be that we get control of large quantities of natural gas and other natural resources committed to our use, that we get free access to the Northwest Passage, that we get the right to build a pipeline in the Mackenzie Delta." Most people feel that in the phrase of the president, "other natural resources", there is going to be an increasing demand for some of Canada's water supplies.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I am not at all reassured by the minister's statement. Near the end of his comments he said:

I reaffirm in the strongest possible terms that no water could be sold to the United States without the approval of the government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think there should be any selling of water to the United States without the consent and agreement of this Parliament.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** I do not think that a government in office for only a specific time has any right to give away one of our most valuable natural assets. I hope the government will be prepared to assure the House that, before any agreement is entered into which will give away water or any natural resource, the consent of this Parliament as a whole will be sought by the gentlemen opposite.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened with great interest to the statement just made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, all the more so as the main part of this statement relates to the Grand Canal Project which will cross the whole length of the district that I represent.

The minister has told us that foreigners have come to our country to study the formation and the movement of the ice on our lakes and streams. I deplore the fact that such surveys were not entrusted to our own experts. In my view, we do not lack university graduates who are able to do this kind of work. At any rate, I deplore the fact that such research work has been entrusted to foreigners.

With regard to the project that was initiated over 10 years ago by Mr. Tom Kierans, a Sudbury engineer, to divert the waters of the James Bay Basin to the Great Lakes, the minister has just stated that no study in that connection has been more thorough than that of Mr. Kierans. Maybe those studies were not