

Lake of the Woods Control Board

very pleasant circumstances of two provinces, with rivers originating in one province and flowing into the other province, getting together, pooling their resources and working out a mutual deal which gives a great advantage to both provinces. I think this sets a precedent for other provinces and, if necessary, to states of the union, whereby provinces and countries enjoying the waters of the same river basin, by pooling their efforts, can achieve a fair division and a much greater return by their co-operation than they could by working separately.

To those who are not familiar with this area—and I except the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Benidickson)—

Mr. Pickersgill: And also for Bonavista-Twillingate.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle):—the situation is somewhat as follows: The Lake of the Woods is, I believe, the tenth largest fresh water lake in the world. Rainy river and other short rivers flow into this Lake of the Woods and the water moves northward along the western boundary of Ontario and goes into the Winnipeg river which, in turn, is joined downstream by the English river. The English river derives its waters to some extent from Eagle lake, but mostly from the lac Seul system and, in 1928, when they added the lac Seul system to the Lake of the Woods, they pooled the two basins under the one control authority, which meant that this control board had jurisdiction over the levels of water for the areas not only of the Lake of the Woods but also of the lac Seul basin, which waters flow into the same river as the waters of Lake of the Woods, and its tributary, namely the Winnipeg river.

If the maximum power is to be achieved by spreading the flow of this storage over the year there must be very careful control and synchronization of the flow of waters out of these river basins. This has worked for over 30 years in so far as the Lake of the Woods is concerned and for 20 years in so far as lac Seul and the Lake of the Woods are concerned. An historic occasion has now occurred in that they have gone into a new river basin, one which flows into the Hudson bay and, by putting in a diversion or a dam, they have been able to direct the water of the Albany river system back into the lac Seul system and from there into the English river and into the Winnipeg river, thereby creating tremendously increased storage. This has given to the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba increased power at much lower cost than would have been provided by working alone.

I may say in pointing out the significance of this diversion that if the water levels at lac

Seul are high and they did not need the water in the lake St. Joseph region, they could let the water flow back down through the Albany river. The result of all this planning on the parts of the governments of Ontario and Manitoba has made it possible, as I said before, not only for larger amounts of power to be available but for the provision of cheaper power and much firmer power over the whole year.

It has, of course, brought the federal government into the picture because, if you bring in water from other drainage basins in an area such as lake Winnipeg which is already draining the Lake of the Woods and lac Seul, then you add to the water supply of lake Winnipeg and regions below. Naturally the interests of the people of the lake Winnipeg area and those areas below it must be protected. There is the question of flood damage control as well as the question of power, which must be considered, and the technique of protecting these people downstream is covered by holding back the river and the lakes and the storage basins higher up. This is where the interest of the federal government comes in.

The boundary between the United States of America and Canada runs along the Rainy river and cuts off the southwestern corner of the Lake of the Woods, the lowlying lands on the south shores of the Lake of the Woods and, likewise in the United States, the banks of the Rainy river. Therefore, if the level of the water in the Lake of the Woods were to go high enough, under our convention with the United States of America dated 1925 and under the over-all jurisdiction of the international joint commission and the administration by the international board of control this control of the area is taken from the Lake of the Woods control board, which is made up of Canadians, and shifted over to an international board. That is the means whereby our international responsibilities are carried out under this act and I mention this to the house to make absolutely certain that everyone understands that we are fulfilling our international obligations by means of this control.

The bill has been in the hands of hon. members for some time and by reading through these amendments they will be able to judge the importance of them in dealing with the aspect of the changing composition of the board. Most of these changes relate to the lieutenant governor of Manitoba and the only significant change is the one in the third amendment where a new subsection is added.

Mr. Benidickson: That is 3 (c).

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Yes, 3 (c).