

late and support a policy that defines a national disaster as a disaster which is beyond the capacity of the province concerned to meet adequately in so far as the expenses of immediate assistance are concerned.

I support the action of the federal government in declaring the Fraser valley floods to be a national disaster, but I do hope that, as a result of that declaration, every village or community will not be pressing upon this government their difficulties as a national disaster. I know our people have enough spirit; I certainly know they have in the riding I have the honour to represent, to meet minor difficulties. I have received letters pointing out the co-operation by all classes and ages and elements in the community. I am informed it has been an inspiration to watch these people fighting together a common danger, the rising waters of the Columbia river.

I am sure that, where difficulties arise on a lesser scale than what should be considered a national disaster, our people have enough spirit, enough spunk and enough local cohesion to mend their own fences. Now that the federal government has declared the Fraser valley disaster a national disaster, I hope that every isolated farm which is flooded will not be brought to the attention of the federal government as a national disaster. That is all I have to say with regard to immediate assistance.

Long-range planning of the type mentioned by the hon. member for Vancouver North to control these floods and to provide for the conservation of these waters is, I think, a matter that comes under federal jurisdiction to the extent that the federal government and the provinces must combine to work out a long-range solution for the control of these flood waters. So far as the Columbia is concerned, as the hon. member for Vancouver North has mentioned there are two of the largest dams in the world on that river. At the present time a joint board of engineers working under the direction of the joint international commission is making a survey of the river, both in the United States and in Canada, both in the United States section and in the Canadian section there is a survey of that river proceeding with regard to building secondary dams to hold back the flood waters in the mountains, and major dams on the main portion of the river for the purpose of conserving those waters both for the development of power and for irrigation. In that respect the problem is to a great extent a national problem.

I do think, Mr. Speaker, that out of this flood disaster on the Fraser river and the near

disaster on the Columbia river we can derive some inspiration to work together and solve this problem jointly as between federal and provincial governments; federal, provincial and local authorities co-operating together to harness the powers of nature, so that they will not in future be a menace but will serve mankind to great advantage.

Mr. THOMAS REID (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the hon. member for Vancouver North (Mr. Sinclair) for bringing up this subject tonight and for the able manner in which he laid the whole picture before the house. As one who was out in British Columbia during the flood and flew over the district three times at a low altitude, I can say it has to be seen to be realized how great the catastrophe is. I thought, after the speech by the hon. member for Vancouver North, we might have had some statement from one of the ministers regarding what is going to be done. The waters are beginning to recede, it is true, but the great task of rehabilitation lies before that whole country, and as one coming from that country I would like the ministry to be good enough to tell the house what steps are being taken by the dominion government, in co-operation with the provincial government, in the matter of rehabilitation.

I know that many statements were made during the flood, and many wild statements, too, as to the reasons for the disaster. Perhaps I can give the house an idea of the seriousness of the situation by describing what took place at Hell's Gate canyon. That is where the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries built their fisheries. Three weeks ago the floor of it was dry. The fisheries are sixty feet high. Inside of eleven days the water rose 128 feet in the canyon and swept away the suspension bridge and all the little buildings around it. When one listened to the suggestions made to keep the flood waters back one realized that those who made those suggestions had no conception whatsoever of the great and sudden rise that had taken place in the Fraser river waters.

Hundreds of people have been driven from their homes and, as has been pointed out by the hon. member for Vancouver North, they are wondering what is to be done. Many of them will not be able to go back to their places for months. It will take time for the waters to recede, and there are districts where the water will have to be pumped out back into the Fraser river.

I was hoping that the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) or some other minister would tell the house and the country what