

Water Resources Programs

Even when we form the government in two years' time, the minister concerned will not be able to export water unless the Parliament of Canada so approves.

I do recall during the second meeting we had in committee that the minister was present. This was a session attended by the departmental officials, including Dr. Tinney, and I should just like to quote what was said at that time about the diversion or exportation of water. The hon. member for Thunder Bay (Mr. Penner) said:

—a lot is going on in an unofficial capacity, and nothing will be done until a comprehensive study of our own needs has been undertaken.

The hon. member was referring to the fact that there have been unofficial reports or discussions about the exportation of water. The witness, Dr. Tinney, replied, as reported at page 2:26 of the proceedings:

We must first make a comprehensive study of Canadian needs. This is what the Canada Water Act is all about and, if and when the consideration of export comes up, it has to be based on that kind of analysis. There is no consideration of export. There has been no consideration of export by the federal government. We are studying no plan whatsoever for the export of water to the United States.

This is a departmental official speaking, and he is saying that this is what the Canada Water Act is all about. If the Canada Water Act is about a comprehensive water management policy, pollution, and so on, then it deals with exportation. We say quite clearly that no water should be exported without the approval of Parliament. The matter is quite simple, and I hope at least one member on the government side will tell the House how he feels about this particular amendment.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to support both motion No. 6 and No. 25. I believe that in controlling about one quarter of all the fresh water in the world, Canada is in a unique position. It may not strike many members as being a unique position, but in view of the fact that in some countries of the world it is difficult to get a glass of fresh pure water, where bath privileges are limited to the very occasional one and water cannot be used in sanitary toilets, I suggest the matter deserves deep consideration.

Water resources belong to the provinces; there is no question about that. I am wondering why we are engaging in all this talk in view of the fact that yesterday Premier John Robarts stated that Ontario was not looking for a legal or constitutional battle over the

[Mr. Comeau.]

proposed Canada Water Act, even though the province's legal experts had found it unconstitutional in every major aspect. During the 14 years I have been in the House we would have done better, as I have said before, not to put even 25 per cent of the legislation we have passed on the books, because most of it has had so many flaws and caused so many problems that we have had to amend it.

Premier Robarts was being interviewed following Attorney General Arthur Wishart's tabling in the legislature of his department's opinion of the federal legislation when he made the comment to which I have just referred. I note that he was asked by the Ontario Liberal leader in the house, Robert Nixon, to table the departmental report. So as I say, I do not know whether we are just talking here for fun or not.

Be that as it may, I wanted to add a few words to what the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding) has said about water that is transported through various channels. He referred to the Columbia River and to the Coulee dam. His remarks were interesting because they indicate the ramifications of water resource development.

In the first place, the dam was built as a war measure to provide electrical power. Secondly, when the dam was built it was used to create an artificial lake in the bed of the old glacial Columbia River. Today, the lake stretches some eight or 10 miles in length and some three miles in width and forms a huge basin where boats are sailed and people go to spend summer holidays.

Over and above that, a third use made of the lake is for irrigation. The land below it was almost desert, having practically no rainfall. As a result of the artificial lake, an irrigation system has been established that has brought hundreds of thousands of acres of land into agricultural use. This land is part of the fine fruit land now in the United States which raises particularly the harder fruit, such as apples.

The hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) very wisely pointed out that the United States has spent considerable time and money in conducting a survey of resources in the north, the water supply potential, and so on. I would be the last to suggest that we should deprive the United States people of water to drink. However, I would also say, whether or not we have water for sale we should be very interested in what is going on. I do not know of anyone who has made such a survey to determine whether or not we