

Adjournment Debate

scheme with a message to the U.S. State Department. Nonetheless, it is to the government's credit that this message, like others sent in October, 1971, January, 1973, and October, 1973 asked the United States to stop work on the project, calling for a moratorium on construction. The government must now press for some definite answers from Washington. For while the latest reply from the United States stated that they would "comply with their obligations" under the boundary waters treaty of 1909, formulated by the International Joint Commission, construction continues at the Garrison site.

The possible pollution of the waters of the Souris River and the Red River resulting from the Garrison scheme would violate article IV of the boundary waters treaty and principle 21 of the 1972 Stockholm declaration on the human environment. Article IV of the treaty provides:

● (2220)

The waters herein defined as boundary waters and waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other.

Does this mean that the United States intends to halt construction? If so, when? When are we to get some final answers? When is this United States-Canada meeting regarding the diversion to occur? As yet the government has refrained from involving the International Joint Commission in the problem. Instead, negotiations are supposedly being conducted at the intergovernmental level.

In lieu of the apparent inertia characteristic of these intergovernmental negotiations, perhaps it might be wise to involve the commission in the discussions. After all, Manitobans need all the assistance they can get in fighting the Garrison diversion unit. This is because Premier Schreyer and the provincial NDP government have adopted a "wait and see" attitude, waiting to see what damage the inflowing waters cause before acting to correct the situation. Hon. members were probably as surprised as I was to hear Mr. Schreyer's comments regarding the scheme. After a meeting with North Dakota Governor Arthur Link and other American and Canadian officials concerning the project, Mr. Schreyer stated that his government intends merely to monitor the situation until it can be "proved conclusively that the project is having a harmful effect on Canadian waters". One has to wonder how much more proof the premier needs. Mr. Schreyer went on to say that in the meantime—

There is no point agonizing and speculating and attempting to cause something to stop.

Thus, it appears that it is up to the federal government to defend the interests of the people of Manitoba and protect our province from becoming the sewer for another American dream.

In conclusion, I implore the federal government, specifically the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp), to continue to pursue the matter forcefully with the United States so as to achieve a halt in construction of the Garrison diversion unit pending a full investigation of all possible environmental effects on the waters of Manitoba.

Mr. William Rompkey (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the hon. member has supported the position we have taken in this matter. I assure him that we have been pursuing the matter fully, and intend to do just that.

It might assist the hon. member if I outlined the recent sequence of events relating to the Garrison project in North Dakota. Last October, Canada sent another in a series of notes to the United States state department outlining Canada's opposition to the Garrison diversion project insofar as it adversely affected the Canadian environment. It was our estimate at that time that the irrigation project in the Souris loop planned as part of the Garrison scheme would at least double and perhaps triple the average total dissolved solid content of the Souris River entering Manitoba.

Our diplomatic note contended that such degradation of the waters would violate article IV of the boundary waters treaty which prohibits trans-boundary pollution to the injury of health or property. This note was sent with the full knowledge and support of the Manitoba government. On February 5, the United States replied that no work currently under way under the Garrison project would affect Canada, and that no work would be undertaken that might affect Canada unless it was clear that the United States obligations under the treaty were met.

The United States note, which has been made public, concluded by suggesting a Canada-United States meeting on this matter when some further special United States studies have been completed. It is probable that this meeting will take place next month. On February 25, the governor of North Dakota, at his request, led a United States and North Dakotan delegation to Winnipeg to meet with Premier Schreyer. As the Minister of the Environment has already informed the House, federal Canadian observers were present and participated in the discussions. A communiqué was issued following the meeting, specifically stating that Manitoba welcomed the assurances of the United States state department that the United States would meet its treaty obligations not to pollute Canadian waters to the injury of health or property.

I can state categorically that the Canadian and Manitoba governments have worked closely together throughout the history of this matter. Indeed, Premier Schreyer at the press conference following the meeting with the governor of North Dakota specifically stated that Manitoba had been well served by the federal government's efforts to stop or modify the Garrison project. Any suggestion that there is a difference in view between Winnipeg and Ottawa on this issue does not accord with the facts. We have been pursuing the matter forcefully and we will continue to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House is adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.28 p.m.