

An important conference was planned and it took place in Montreal under the appropriate title of Resources for Tomorrow. Out of that conference came any number of suggestions for the development and wise management of the resource potential of Canada for the future welfare of citizens in all parts of this great country.

Unfortunately, not much progress has been made since the early part of the 'sixties. One of the reasons the spokesmen for the government are so confused in their counsels is that they suddenly find themselves in a situation where they have neglected to outline in any comprehensive manner the economic targets which ought to be achieved if we are to realize the great economic potential of our resources at a time when opportunities for their use are suddenly available. Moreover, and this is most important in the light of the growing concern with respect to environmental pollution, neither have they conceived any comprehensive or co-ordinated policy for the long term development of those resources while at the same time controlling any threat to the environment as a result. There has been a flurry of government legislation in the last two years which purports to deal with these fundamental issues, but again it would seem to be that this has been the result of a crash program rather than of careful long-term planning for the future.

I will mention one example. The Canada Water Act, which was passed as recently as last year, outlined the problem very clearly but unfortunately it supplied none of the answers. It described the "why" but it failed to answer the question "how". We have become aware of these problems to an increasing extent during the last decade. In fact, volumes outlining them came out of the Resources for Tomorrow conference of 1962. The difficulty was that we are short on solutions and on policies designed to deal with the long term development of resources in the best interests of Canada as a whole.

I wish to outline briefly at this stage in my remarks some examples of the government's neglect which has resulted in loss of time in this area, a neglect arising from a negative attitude to the management of our resources which has been motivated largely by political reasons. It so happens that the Conservative administration from 1957 to 1963 placed emphasis on national resource development. The Liberals, being in opposition at that time, took a negative attitude and as a result now find themselves hoist by their own petard. I hear comments coming from the other side of the House. If any hon. gentleman over there wants to ask questions—

Mr. Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean): We were applauding.

The Chairman: Order. I wish hon. members would either be attentive or else not participate in the debate from behind the curtains.

Mr. Dinsdale: I do not know whether they were asking questions or whether it was sound and fury signifying nothing, to quote the great bard.

Some hon. Members: Oh.

An hon. Member: Why not quote Voltaire?

Government Organization Act, 1970

Mr. Dinsdale: Unfortunately, my knowledge of Voltaire does not make it possible for me to quote from that source.

Let us consider the national energy policy. It was laid down in 1959 with the establishment of the National Energy Board, and there has been no fundamental change in policy since that time though the difficulties have grown astronomically. We are now trying to extemporize a national policy to meet the changes which have taken place.

Early in the 'sixties a concerted effort was made by the federal government, in co-operation with the provinces, to establish a national power grid. These comments, it seems to me are quite apropos because one of the new responsibilities of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources under the re-organization proposals in part II will be energy development from water. This is not a new concept by any means. In the conference which took place in 1962, it was optimistically hoped that within a comparatively short time we would see the beginning of a national power grid which would make it possible to use the abundance of hydroelectric energy available in Canada, thereby conserving our fossil fuel and minimizing environmental pollution. A national power grid based on hydroelectric power would obviously be the cleanest and most economical kind of energy development and, as I say, it would conserve our limited fossil fuel supply. After all, fossil fuels are not renewable and once they have been extracted, that is the end of them. Certain agreements were undertaken at that time so that they could become the basis of an expanding national power grid. The development of the tremendous Hydro project in northern Manitoba was the beginning of such agreement. Unfortunately, the ensuing nine years has not seen any further development in the national power grid. When the minister takes part in this debate, I hope he will give us a report on his programs, policies and plans, if any, to bring the program of national resource development up to date and in tune with today's needs. There is a golden opportunity this afternoon for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to explain some of the contradictions that have appeared in government policy as enunciated by important statements made outside this House. There are not too many important statements made in this House of Commons. The ministers have formed the habit of making their policy statements south of the border in cities like Denver or Dallas, or in some of the major centres in Canada. If the minister wants to get part II of the reorganization bill through this afternoon, I think it is incumbent upon him to remove some of the anxiety and concern that has arisen as a result of his contradictory statements.

● (2:20 p.m.)

The minister's Denver speech became famous—or infamous depending on your viewpoint—because it seemed to be a frontal attack on American investment in this country. Then just recently the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, who has some responsibility for resources as well, travelled to Dallas. Whilst there he