

Water Resources Programs

This is not classed as the export of power, though this power is being sold for a 30-year period. Nevertheless, it is, in effect, the exportation of Canadian energy, whether this shows up in any statistics or not.

I should just like to point out in passing that in cases such as this it seems very odd that no record is made of the amount of energy lost through this type of export. I suppose the reason is that they simply do not know how much energy is being produced by the surplus water that is being sold under the Columbia River treaty.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Coming a little closer to 1970, we find that a number of plans have been advanced by various organizations. Some of these have been advanced in this country, but most have originated in the United States. It has been suggested that Canada, with its apparent abundance of water, could well export some of this valuable resource to the south. People have become alarmed about this. We feel there should be some guarantee, especially in a bill such as this which, as I mentioned earlier, is supposed to manage the entire water resources of our nation. Someone said, "if you do not need it, sell it". This does not necessarily make good sense because Canadians to date have never had a proper survey made and therefore do not know how much water there is in Canada. Projections have never been made by any government concerning the requirements 40, 50, or 100 years from now of the people living in this country. So far as this resource is concerned, it would be foolhardy for any government to think in terms of export until comprehensive surveys have been made so that people know what the picture is.

Then, there is another aspect of water diversion and this is the reason I believe it is so important to have an amendment such as this. It is simple enough to divert a river. A river that is running into the Arctic may be diverted south. The course of rivers running into Hudson Bay can quite easily be changed through damming. The water can be brought down by a different route and can be utilized in many different ways. Through research—we are only now beginning to realize the amount of work which has been done worldwide by geologists—we know it is not as simple a proposition as merely saying we have a surplus amount of water here which we can redirect south of the border and for

[Mr. Harding.]

which we will receive so many hundreds of millions of dollars or whatever the cash agreement might be.

The ecologists are telling us now that we must be extremely careful about any type of diversion. Once a certain flow of water is prevented from going into either the Arctic Ocean, Hudson Bay or some other body of water surrounding our Canadian nation, for example, our whole ecology could be changed. We could change the ecology not only of the area through which the river initially ran but also the ecology of the ocean into which it ran. We are just beginning to get this information. I recently visited the Bedford Institute in Nova Scotia where ecological studies have been conducted. We heard the story of what has happened at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, not because of diversion but because of damaging. We learned of the changes that are taking place in respect of the fish runs and so on.

The situation is important enough in this day and age that we believe the people of Canada must have all the protection they can get. This is the reason we appeal to the government to accept this amendment, or one similar to it, so that there can be written into the Canada Water Act a guarantee to the people of Canada that before any diversion takes place the matter must come before this House of Commons. There, the searchlight of public opinion can be turned on it so that all the facts can be obtained for the Canadian public. This is all we ask. We ask that this protection be included in this legislation. We might be told this is covered by other acts of Parliament. But I want to stress that this is the act that is supposed to provide for the proper, logical and sensible development of all Canadian water resources. If that is so, the export of water must be covered in one of the clauses of this bill. I urge the members of this House to accept an amendment along these lines which would give the Canadian people and ourselves the extra protection they certainly require.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants)
moved:

That Bill C-144, an act to provide for the management of the water resources of Canada including research and the planning and implementation of programs relating to the conservation, development and utilization of water resources be amended by inserting a new clause 37:

"Construction.

37. This act shall not be construed to authorize any treaty or convention with respect to exporting the water resources of Canada, and no treaty, con-