

The Address—Mr. Cruickshank

only incidentally so. It was a flood control project, but when I saw that great earth dam being built across the Missouri river I thought that, from the nature of the country, it would be a much more difficult project than the South Saskatchewan river project. After all, on the South Saskatchewan river we have steep banks, while at the Fort Peck project they had to build banks all around that great lake which I believe is some 1,500 or 1,600 miles around the perimeter. So, an earth dam of that description could be built, and a great lake could be created. There is sufficient water in the South Saskatchewan I believe to irrigate a larger area of the prairie than the estimate given by the minister and by the engineers, if it is undertaken in steps. I am not asking for anything greater at the moment than the situation seems to demand now.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that many of us have worked throughout the years for consideration of this project. We hope and we trust that we have now everyone's support. I was interested in hearing the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew) support it the other day. I was interested also in hearing the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Hees), and the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Ferguson), eastern members, support the project this afternoon. I am very happy about that, but it has taken a long time. I remember when the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett was head of the Conservative party—I have the reference to the page in my notes, but I am not going to give it at the moment—he warned the house against some of these big projects. I recall that he said the irrigation that had been undertaken in the province of Alberta up to that time was one of the darkest pages of prairie history. May I just say that one of the first speeches I heard in this house, in favour of these large scale irrigation plans, was made by the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore), who is still with us. He had had experience with large scale irrigation both around Salt Lake City and in southern Alberta, and knew how beneficial such projects could be to the communities. Most of all, I want to say this. Let us go ahead with this project, because as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow morning the day will come again when we shall have a shortage of moisture; when the heavens will not drop the beneficial rain. This has been the history of that great country, which is worth preserving, and worth developing.

There was some criticism of what was being done to relieve the distress in western Canada at one stage, but the late R. B. Bennett said that no group of people in the

history of the world ever produced more new wealth per capita in a shorter space of time than the men and women who settled the prairie provinces. That is true. We sometimes hear it said perhaps we bring these prairie problems to the House of Commons frequently. We do, but let us not forget that upon the prosperity of the three prairie provinces and their ability to produce new wealth largely depends the prosperity of this entire country.

Mr. G. A. Cruickshank (Fraser Valley): I should like to take a short time, Mr. Speaker, to join in this debate. I want to assure you that I personally am not worried as to who claims the credit for anything that we may accomplish in Canada. It seems strange to me that, possibly for political reasons—I do not say it is—some members seem to be worried about who gets the credit for this or that. I am in the unfortunate position of having to follow one of the most distinguished speakers in this house, a man for whom I have the greatest admiration. I would have preferred to follow the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Hees) but I did not have that privilege. I have to follow the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell) for whom, as I said, I have the greatest admiration. I think that sometimes he is right, but unfortunately more often he is wrong.

I have heard about this irrigation scheme. Like the hon. member who preceded me, I have had the privilege of motoring through nearly every state in the United States during the past few years. I have seen what they are doing by way of flood control and irrigation. I found that, in most cases, they are endeavouring to combine those two features. I am not going to enter the debate about the Saskatchewan project. I personally do not care, and the people of my riding do not care, whether the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar gets credit for bringing a certain portion of Saskatchewan into production or whether the credit goes where it should, to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner), so long as that portion is brought into production.

You have irrigation problems, but one of my Quebec colleagues has introduced a resolution concerning river bank erosion. I remind the hon. member for Broadview that there is such a thing as river bank erosion. To some of us in western Canada, and those along the St. Lawrence, it is just as important as irrigation on the prairies. In the old days it was said that river bank erosion was a local matter. In the old days, that may have been true. I am glad to see that my hon. friend and