

Supply—Northern Affairs

Again I should like to thank the government. For the people of my area this project certainly is the long-awaited realization of a dream.

Mr. Pallett: Mr. Chairman, this item deals with contributions to the provinces toward the construction of dams and other works to assist in the conservation and control of water resources in accordance with agreements entered into between Canada and the provinces. At this time I should like to express to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources and the government the appreciation of those people who are within the area of the metropolitan Toronto and region conservation authority for the announcement which the minister was able to make on April 19 of this year in which he indicated that an agreement would be entered into for the construction of certain works in that conservation area.

While my riding of Peel is not part of metropolitan Toronto, a portion of it comes within the area over which the conservation authority has jurisdiction. We have had experiences in the past of the ravaging of uncontrolled waters. In 1948 the town of Brampton suffered immense damage from the ram-paging Etobicoke river. As a result of the scare at that time, a diversion was put around Brampton in 1951. The efficacy of such a measure was shown. When hurricane Hazel came along in 1954, Brampton was spared an event that would have resulted in practically eliminating the downtown area. We have there a practical demonstration of what can result when proper conservation works are carried out.

This announcement was also a source of personal satisfaction to me, as it must be to the hon. member for York West, the hon. member for York-Humber and other members who used to belabour the government when they sat on the other side of the house in order to get it to enter into these agreements to effect conservation measures. I well remember a debate in 1955 in which we did not seem to be able to convince the then minister of northern affairs of the benefits that would accrue to that particular area and the country as a whole if these agreements were entered into.

After listening to the debate this afternoon previously on the Columbia river and the inability of the provincial government to co-operate, I say this. The province of Ontario, under a Conservative administration, was prepared to co-operate in this scheme but the then Liberal federal government was not prepared to co-operate. Now that we have both the provincial government and the federal government of the same Conservative

party, we find a measure of co-operation that is certainly resulting in benefits being made available under these conservation measures. I think that the resultant benefits which the hon. member for Oxford indicated in his area followed from these schemes, will certainly follow from this scheme.

Before I conclude I should like to pay a tribute to the conservation authority and in that I include the hon. member for Toronto High Park who sat on that authority, for the persistence shown by them and for their dedication to the work of convincing others that this scheme must be carried out. They persisted over the years. It is an example also of how, when groups at the local level work together themselves and put together their ideas, prepare them carefully and submit them to a responsible and responsive government, action will be achieved. It will result in the saving of property and lives, and greater enjoyment to the people of this area.

I would suggest that the course this government has taken in conservation generally is one that will be increased over the years. We in Canada, because of our abundance of natural resources are sometimes, a little careless with them. This fact is realized by the people in charge of the affairs of this country now. One of the things which must give them great satisfaction is to see put on the statute books of the country legislation such as A.R.D.A. to preserve the natural assets of the country and to see moneys voted in co-operation with the provinces and the municipalities so that our children and our grandchildren will have saved for them the beauties of nature that we enjoy.

Mr. Pickersgill: I wonder whether the minister can say what the formula is for the division of costs in these schemes?

Mr. Dinsdale: All these water conservation measures are carried out in the framework of the Canada Water Conservation Act which provides for participation by the federal government up to 37½ per cent. In the case of the metropolitan Toronto scheme or the Humber scheme, the provincial participation is 37½ per cent and that of the local authority 25 per cent.

Mr. Pickersgill: Can the minister say on what date that principle of division of costs was first established?

Mr. Dinsdale: I believe the act was first passed in 1953. The first occasion on which it was used was in 1960 in connection with the upper Thames program.

Mr. Pickersgill: Was a different formula used in connection with developments on the Grand River?