

Mr. FULTON: Can you give us an idea of the approach that is being taken to the problem? What I have in mind is this, that various spokesmen for the government and for others, have stressed the necessity of following an approach somewhat similar to the approach that was taken in the field of energy, having in mind in that context the petroleum and natural gas and energy, as such, that resulted in the setting up of the National Energy Board. The idea was that we should make an inventory of Canada's potential supply of water, and an inventory of Canada's present and future needs, in so far as that can be done in order, to assist in working out a national water policy. Could you tell us whether, with the new consolidation so far as it has gone which you just mentioned, a beginning has been made on that sort of study?

Mr. HARRISON: I think Mr. Patterson can enlarge on that for you.

Mr. PATTERSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the water resources branch of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys has the responsibility of conducting the hydrometric surveys across the country. The arrangements are in existence with all the provinces, with the exception of Quebec to conduct the hydrometric work, that is, the stream measurement and gauging work, in all of the provinces except Quebec. With Quebec we have a very good arrangement. We still carry out the responsibilities for national activities, work the navigation, and those responsibilities which the national government has, and Quebec does the actual stream gauging work on their power rivers for their own uses. They provide that data to us and we will continue to publish this data in our water resources papers which are available through the Queen's Printer, giving the information on the water resource all across Canada.

We are extending this coverage all the time into the more remote and northerly areas, and intensifying the coverage in those areas of the country where industry and population growth demand the need for more intensive information on the water resource. We are co-operating with the provinces in various areas and with respect to the northern slopes in Ontario, the waters flowing into James Bay and Hudson Bay. We are carrying out a co-operative study there under which we are increasing the gauging coverage and obtaining better and more records of the actual water that is available there. The province is conducting studies to determine what its future use for those waters may be, and at the same time we are conducting studies of diversion possibilities between rivers on the northern slope and between the northern slope and the southern slope, so that if Ontario does determine that it has more water than it needs on the northern slope and would be prepared to have part of its resource put into the great lakes system, we will know what can be done in that respect physically and what it may cost to do it.

Similarly, across the prairie provinces, in the Saskatchewan-Nelson basin, as you have heard from time to time, arrangements are at present being completed to conduct an extensive and intensive study of the hydrology and the water supply of the whole system there, and the possibilities of improving that supply by means of diversions from the Mackenzie River basin and its various tributaries.