

Supply—Northern Affairs

An hon. Member: It is unanimous.

Motion negatived.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion lost. It being six o'clock, the house will revert to the business which was interrupted at five o'clock.

SUPPLY

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Martineau in the chair.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 8 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS AND
NATIONAL RESOURCES

Water resources branch—

649. Construction or acquisition of buildings, works, land and equipment—further amount required, \$40,000.

Miss LaMarsh: I should like to say something with regard to this vote. Perhaps these remarks do not have the urgency which they had recently. The minister no doubt is aware that, with his responsibility over water resources, he has received a brief which was prepared jointly for the governments of Canada and the United States with respect to the proposed extension of Niagara river remedial works and certain proposed operational procedures. One such brief was prepared by the Ontario hydro and one was prepared by the power authority of the state of New York and they were submitted in March of last year.

This fact did not become known to the people of Niagara Falls until an item appeared in the *Globe and Mail* of October 6, 1961, wherein it was indicated that the proposal was to undertake certain studies with a view to making a further diversion of water from the Niagara river for power production. When these plans became known to individuals in Niagara Falls, there was a considerable outcry. Under the guidance of the greater Niagara chamber of commerce, which covers three of the largest municipalities in my riding, a committee was set up comprised of both United States and Canadian residents from the twin cities of Niagara Falls. After hearing representations from Ontario hydro and from the United States power authority, the committee found itself completely opposed to the proposal.

While it is admitted that the initial request was only to conduct certain tests, these tests would have resulted, it was anticipated, in a reduction of the water flowing over the

falls. Now, in 1950 there was a treaty entered into between the United States and Canadian governments, and that treaty provided there would be a minimum flow over Niagara Falls of 100,000 cubic feet per second during the day between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 p.m., and that would be from April 1 to September 15. Then, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. the same quantity of water would be allowed from September 16 to October 31 inclusive. At all other times, the allowable flow was to be reduced to a minimum of 50,000 cubic feet per second, except when there are ice jams in the river to such an extent that it would be necessary to flush them down. The 100,000 cubic feet per second allowance, which is allowed in what is called the tourist season, is about one third the flow of the Niagara river.

When on November 1, 1961, for the first time, the smaller amount was permitted it was immediately ascertained that in so far as the laymen or tourists were concerned, there was an extremely bad effect. It was apparent that there was in the upper river large rocks which had never before been visible; that the water in the basin below the falls in which the *Maid of the Mist* plies had dropped by about 35 feet exposing hazardous rocks; that the mist which had formerly hung over the falls and was in itself a tourist attraction, had fallen to ground level because there was not sufficient updraft resulting from the fall of water to lift it. The local people were appalled by this, particularly since they have made very strenuous efforts in the last few years to attempt to increase their tourist business all year round and not simply limit it to the pleasant summer months of the year.

Meetings were arranged and there was considerable outcry. I had expected that when these estimates were raised I would be in a position to make considerable complaint and appeal to the government to heed the outcry of the residents of Niagara Falls, New York and Niagara Falls, Ontario to assist. As a result of correspondence with the then minister of energy in Ontario, I received the brief which had been forwarded to the international joint commission and which had indicated that it was anticipated some \$3 million worth more in power might be developed by what was considered to be an additional minor diversion. However, that diversion, it was expected by those in the area who were interested, would have resulted in an even further loss of water, in less sound developing from the falls, in less mist and indeed in a decrease in beauty. It has been estimated that the falls bring into Niagara Falls city about \$40 million a

[Mr. Speaker.]