

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

conditions a number of persons become unemployed at the same time and claim unemployment insurance. When these lay-off situations occur, it might be possible for the commission to temporarily station staff in Campbell River so that claim processing could be shortened a little. The possibility of operating in this manner will be examined.

In addition, the commission will continue to maintain statistics on the number of applicants for unemployment insurance benefit living in Campbell River, in order to keep the situation under continuous review. The commission will reconsider its decision if it should ever develop that the workload in the area warrants maintenance of a full-time office.

I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that persons living in Campbell River are receiving good and fast service from the Unemployment Insurance Commission, as is the case everywhere in Canada. However, the commission will re-examine its operations in the area to determine whether it would be possible to expedite the system somewhat at periods of peak claim activity by providing some kind of temporary special service at such times.

WATER RESOURCES—DIVERSION OF WATERS
FROM HUDSON AND JAMES BAYS

Mr. B. Keith Penner (Thunder Bay): Mr. Speaker, last week in the house I raised a question which my people in Thunder Bay view as being of the utmost importance and urgency. I contend also that it is of considerable significance to the whole nation. I asked the minister who is responsible for energy and water resources, the Minister without Portfolio from Saskatchewan, whether the federal government in co-operation with the province of Ontario is planning a proposed massive diversion of fresh water from the Hudson and James Bay watershed southward into Lake Superior. My immediate concern, of course, is for the people of the region and the changes which would be brought about in their environment as a result of a massive water diversion program.

● (10:20 p.m.)

The consequences of such a scheme have national ramifications as well, and it is time for the matter to be openly and thoroughly discussed before we make a commitment to sell our birthright. The effects of such a diversion program would certainly be drastic, in that thousands and thousands of acres would be flooded in the creation of vast water storage basins. Timber resources, trap lines, wildlife, fish and game would all be affected.

[Mr. McNulty.]

The balance of nature would certainly be upset. The Indian people who live on the reserves and settlements in the area, as well as the tourist camp operators, want to know what is likely to happen to their homes and establishments if and when such a plan is implemented.

There is in existence a report entitled "A Proposed Water Diversion Program Out of Northwestern Ontario into Lake Superior" dated June 25, 1964. Since this report was written, there have been six consecutive progress reports, the last of which is dated November, 1968. This last report contains sweeping plans and recommendations in detail for the diversion of the Winisk and other northern rivers.

All these reports have been submitted in restricted quantity to a federal-provincial co-ordinating committee on northern Ontario water resources studies and to a few officials of both the federal and Ontario governments. The entire study has been conducted under a veil of tight security and almost complete secrecy. I am asking the minister to table these reports in the house, so that we may know the goals and progress of this study.

The report states that the total cost of such a diversion program would be about \$2.1 billion. It stresses the need for replenishing the water supply of the Great Lakes basin, and predicts the basin will have a population of 200 million within 100 years. We know many United States cities in the Great Lakes region are anxious and concerned about future sources of fresh water for domestic and industrial consumption.

What will this policy mean for our national sovereignty, Mr. Speaker? Once our northern rivers are diverted southward, we will become even more securely tied to the United States economy. The exporting of such a resource can never be curtailed once the flow begins. We in northwestern Ontario want to know: Is our government going to proceed with plans and proposals for the exporting of our fresh water to the United States?

An official of the Ontario Water Resources Commission said last Thursday that the federal and Ontario governments are conducting a study which could lead to diversion of some northern Ontario rivers and the sale of fresh water to the United States. If such is the policy of the government, Mr. Speaker, my constituents and I wish to be told about it. After all, fresh water has now become our most treasured natural resource. We in Thunder Bay once thought that gold, iron ore and