

*Manitoba Flood*

coming on at an average of one in eighteen years. Well, it just happens that the last two have come within two years of one another. This one is by far the worst, and I believe will no doubt spur on those who are interested in making plans which will cope with an adequate means to protect people in the future. I doubt whether dams and dikes will be able to protect the country from floods. In the west when we have the proper conditions of frost, when the land is frozen and on top of that we have, as we had this year, a very heavy and late snowfall, and then if in the late spring we have a succession of very warm days, there is bound to be flooding, no matter how many dams or dikes are built.

Nevertheless it is well known that there is ample room for dikes and dams. As an illustration, I think it would be a very simple matter to build a dam to cope with the Pembina river when on extreme occasions its waters flow over from the United States and wash into two or three of our small towns. So far as the Pembina river itself is concerned, with a deep valley running about half its length, while it might be extravagant it would be a comparatively simple matter for engineers to construct a dam which would be adequate to hold back a great deal of the early run-off.

I am sure these matters will be taken into consideration. While I believe it is necessary that this matter be stressed as greatly as possible, nevertheless I am confident that the authorities are taking the matter under consideration. I share the view of the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Viau) in my disregard for the coalition government; at the same time I am confident that they are devoting themselves to the situation, and that the federal government will be called in as much and as extensively as is necessary.

**Mr. J. S. Sinnott (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, in my view the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Jutras) was quite justified in bringing this national disaster to the attention of the house this afternoon. Going home during the Easter vacation by motorcar, and traversing much of the northern country, one could easily realize that something of this nature might develop. For a thousand miles we travelled through snowbanks anywhere up to ten or twelve feet in depth. With the breaking of spring one might expect a disaster of this kind.

I join with the hon. member for Provencher in expressing thanks to the Red Cross, municipal officials, the provincial government and to everyone who has taken a hand in helping those who have suffered from this disaster. I myself had something

to do with floods in 1942. One morning when I walked out to my barn I found fifty head of cattle in about three feet of water, and the old sow with her head sticking out and with all the young pigs floating around. I know something about disasters of this kind.

Farmers in that area have lost thousands of bushels of grain. Some of them thought they could save themselves by moving on to ground that was safe in 1948. They moved their seed and feed and cattle to these spots, only to find that the water surged up beyond the point of the 1948 flood. Therefore all their efforts were fruitless.

I suggest that the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) that the dominion government would consider this matter, and give it the attention which was given the disaster in British Columbia last year, should be sufficient assurance. I know the premier of Manitoba personally and, farmer that he is, I know this disaster will receive firsthand attention from his government.

I do not agree with some hon. members, however, when they say that the dominion government should put itself on the spot as to the amount to be made available, because immediately the dominion government indicates how much it is willing to give, or how much it will contribute, what will happen? Politics will enter into the question, and the very next day we will hear, "Not enough, not enough!"

In my view the dominion government has taken the right attitude in stating that when the damage is surveyed it will be in a position to say what amount of aid should be extended. Working in conjunction with the provincial government, I am sure these people who have suffered from the disaster will be looked after by both the provincial and dominion governments.

**Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, there are one or two references I intend to make to this matter arising out of the remarks of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson). Everybody expected that he was going to make a pronouncement of importance conveying hope to the people affected by this flood that something tangible would be done. They will be disappointed with the statement he has made. After you remove from it the commendation he gave, and properly so, to the Red Cross and other relief agencies, to the rural municipalities, to the councils and to the government of Manitoba, and, with a little self-praise, to the government to which he belongs, when all these things were said and done and the constitutional issue touched on lightly by him, little in the nature of hope was held