

*Water Resources Programs*

go quickly to the U.S.A. So I hope that in returning to us at last he will give us some indication of government thinking on the very important matter of what, if anything, we should do with our surplus water. As was noted yesterday, this country is abundantly rich, and is perhaps the only country in the world that is abundantly rich, in surplus water—but even that surplus is decreasing.

The purpose of the amendment, as suggested, is that the export of water should be subject to a treaty. In other words, any export of water should be illegal until Parliament has expressed its opinion. I think this is important, and I will give a couple of very simple reasons why that is so. For one thing, as some of us know, a megalopolis is building up along the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes system that eventually will extend from somewhere between Montreal and Quebec to Milwaukee and Chicago. I say "eventually" I mean soon, as does the government when it uses that term; that is, it will happen within ten or fifteen years. This megalopolis will be filled with people who will be thirsty, and will have a great need for water. It will be larger than the megalopolis that now exists between Boston and Baltimore and Washington. That is a simple statement of fact. I have dealt with it previously. I hope that when the megalopolis appears the press will not suddenly come around and ask, "Why didn't someone foresee it"? It was foreseen in 1969, and it is foreseen now. There will be a tremendous market for water within that stretch, and for Canadian purposes it involves, the area from Quebec City down to the Great Lakes. If we make short-term bargains and our water becomes mixed up in any deals with the United States we can get ourselves because we may then find that our own needs are parallel to the needs of the United States.

• (3:20 p.m.)

I thought that the amendment of my hon. friend and my amendment would commend themselves to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, a gentleman who is prepared to put up electronic fences to protect Canadians from something. If he is prepared to go that far, maybe he would take a short step and endorse our amendments which at least have the advantage of being of a common sense variety.

Yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary quoted two arguments that I had used at one point in the committee proceedings about the

[Mr. McCleave.]

difficulty of applying a clause such as is proposed. How would one deal with floods? I suggest that if a flood arose it should be treated as an act of God, which is surely an exception to anything that one can put forth in a treaty or contract. I do not find any difficulty about that.

Again I used the argument, and my words come back to haunt me—doesn't everyone in this place suffer that from time to time—with respect to King Canute and how one can stop the relentless roll of water. The Parliamentary Secretary also used this argument. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that you can disturb the natural flow of water. You can divert water courses, and this has been done. You can dam waters, so that water does not flow as it used to flow. This is a very effective method of controlling water resources. There are other means by which the perfectly natural flow of water can be disturbed, so it is simply not a question of passing a resolution endorsing the reasoning of old King Canute when he told the waters to stay back. By adopting my amendment we would be doing something more effective than that. The Canadian Parliament would be saying that if we allow our water to go abroad we would do so only under certain conditions.

Earlier this year when we dealt in Parliament with Arctic sovereignty I thought it was the most exciting debate we had. Members were getting up on all sides of the House, speaking from their hearts and their guts, explaining their attitudes toward Canadian sovereignty. You don't get a bigger issue in this Parliament than Canadian sovereignty, the question of how we feel about Canadian nationhood and the rights of Canadian nationhood. I suggest we will get an equally good expression of sovereignty if we deal with the very practical question of what we do about something of which we have a great abundance, our water.

Further, and I conclude very quickly, the suggestion I have made to export water only under a treaty would mean that full publicity would be centred on any deal. Before the deal could take effect, its terms would have to be spelled out. There would be public knowledge of them through parliamentary discussion, so nothing could be done by the government, or by any future government, without all Members of Parliament expressing their opinions upon it. In short, Sir, it is a way of giving notice to the public and allowing full expression of opinion here, rather than the public