

*Flood Control*

floods under its supervision. I suggest that the government consider setting up an over-all authority to deal with the question of assisting in preventing floods on all the rivers in Canada, such as the Portneuf, the Chaudiere and other rivers in Quebec and the many rivers in Ontario which are known to overflow. Even in Manitoba, in very early years, the Red river has overflowed to such an extent that the land for many miles around Winnipeg was flooded. There is no telling when that might happen again. It all depends on the amount of water that falls in a given length of time. For instance, if three inches fell on the 1,360 square miles of the Grand river watershed above Galt, that would be a fall of approximately nine billion cubic feet of water, and would be enough to wipe the whole valley out, unless there were some control over it. I believe it was only last year that there was a disastrous flood around Edmonton. So I would suggest to the leader of the government that, as the occasion presents itself, he bring before his ministers the question of establishing an over-all authority throughout Canada to cooperate with all the provinces on the same basis as the United States government cooperated with the state of Ohio in the matter of conservation and flood prevention. It will save the country millions and perhaps billions of dollars and thousands of lives. There is no reason why it should not be done. I merely rise to endorse what the leader of the opposition said, and make that suggestion to the government.

Hon. PAUL MARTIN (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, no one can take issue with the objective remarks just made by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. MacNicol). Of course, as he is aware, in the proposals made by the federal government to the provinces the kind of arrangement which he suggests is envisaged. What I have risen to deal with particularly is another phase of the problem. As one would gather from what the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) said with regard to this unfortunate situation at the moment in western Ontario, the responsibility for dealing with the matter resides in this parliament and on this government. Because he has left that impression, I think one should make a reference or two to the problem. The situation in western Ontario is one which is now causing a great deal of concern to the people in the whole of the western Ontario peninsula. This is not the first time these flood conditions have occurred, but they have occurred again and the loss to that particular area is tremendous. What are the facts in so far as responsibility is concerned?

[Mr. MacNicol.]

On April 9, the mayor of London is reported as having said:

All the money the Ontario government has spent on surveys and enabling legislation in connection with flood control has been "wasted money."

I do not subscribe to that view, but I do state that the mayor of London quite properly looks upon this matter as one that comes within the authority of the government of Ontario.

Mr. GRAYDON: May I ask my hon. friend what paper he is quoting from?

Mr. MARTIN: From the Toronto *Star*. My hon. friend will find the same observations made in his own paper, the Toronto *Telegram*.

Mr. GRAYDON: Have you it there?

Mr. MARTIN: Yes, I have it in my desk.

Mr. GRAYDON: Perhaps you might quote from it.

Mr. MARTIN: I will in a few minutes.

Mr. ST. LAURENT: He prefers to use the best.

Mr. MARTIN: On the same date the mayor of London made it known—and the hon. member for London (Mr. Manross) will, I am sure, corroborate this—that the city of London and the town of St. Mary's had applied to the Ontario minister of public works to have a meeting at which all municipalities concerned would decide if they wanted a conservation authority set up for the Thames. We find the minister of planning, Hon. Dana Porter, quite properly, as indeed several members on this side of the house, including myself did, visiting those areas. The minister of planning, who visited those areas, is reported as having said as follows—

Mr. GRAYDON: What paper is this?

Mr. MARTIN: This is from the Toronto *Star*. He is reported to have said that he was shocked by what he had seen and the damage which had occurred. The minister goes on to say:

The disaster will have a profound effect in moving municipalities to some decision on a thorough flood control programme under the Conservation Authorities Act of 1946.

But apparently that is not the situation in the eyes of the mayor of Chatham. The mayor of Chatham, Mayor Ralph Steele, president of the West Kent Progressive Conservative Association, is quoted as having said as follows:

Thousands of acres of valuable agricultural lands have been inundated. Chatham has suffered only slight damage in comparison. Yet