

Water Resources Programs

The House would also consider at the same time the motion moved by the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave), seconded by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken):

That Bill C-144, an act to provide for the management of the water resources of Canada including research and the planning and implementation of programs relating to the conservation, development and utilization of water resources be amended by inserting a new clause 37:

"Construction.

37. This act shall not be construed to authorize any treaty or convention with respect to exporting the water resources of Canada, and no treaty, convention or agreement with respect to such export shall be binding unless authorized by the parliament of Canada."

and by renumbering the subsequent clause accordingly.

Mr. Lewis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, if you will forgive my taking a moment. Your Honour said you would consider the discussion on Nos. 1 to 5 inclusive and on No. 16. I merely rise to remind Your Honour that we have made no representations today with regard to No. 16 on the assumption that it would come up another day.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is quite right. The understanding is that we will not dispose of the bill this afternoon and will eventually reach motion No. 16, at which time argument might be considered by the Chair.

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West) moved:

That Bill C-144, an act to provide for the management of the water resources of Canada including research and the planning and implementation of programs relating to the conservation, development and utilization of water resources be amended by adding thereto a new clause 5A to read as follows:

"5A. No inland waterways shall be diverted for the purpose of exportation without the approval of parliament."

He said: In speaking to motion No. 6, Mr. Speaker, this amendment is designed to make certain there will be no export of Canadian water without the approval of Parliament. In moving this motion, I should like to point out that during the hearings in committee several groups raised this issue. They felt that since the Canada Water Act was supposed to deal with the control and development of all Canadian waters, it should certainly include some reference to water export.

The groups went further and felt that water export led to the continental concept of water development. I do not think there is

any doubt about that; I am quite certain that all hon. members of the House realize that the export of water is certainly very closely tied in with the continental energy plan about which we have heard so much.

When a similar amendment was put before the committee—it has now been changed very slightly—a number of the committee members felt the amendment offered at that time was not clear enough. As I recall it, the only objection to it by several committee members was that the way it was drafted at the time would prevent the carrying over the border of water in bottles.

Arguments of this nature are a clear indication that the members who advance them are interested in finding some minor flaws in order to turn down amendments. In committee, even a change of several words in a suggested amendment is usually accepted by the mover of the amendment if the amendment is going to be incorporated into the legislation. This is why we have put this amendment before the House of Commons. As I say, a similar amendment was moved in the committee, but the committee members, in their wisdom, felt there should not be this safeguard for our Canadian water in this particular statute.

May I point out that the Canadian people are becoming very apprehensive over our resource development. This development includes not only development of water resources but of all natural resources in Canada. However, we are here dealing with water.

The export of water is not merely the taking of a certain amount of the liquid over the 49th parallel. In many instances, such as in the case of the Columbia River, we have allowed flood waters, which normally belong to the country of origin, to be sold to the United States on a power basis. We trap the water in Canada. The water is then released from storage dams. This amounts to exporting water, because this surplus water could have been redirected into other rivers or to other provinces in Canada, and no one would have cause for complaint.

As I have said, under international law the normal flow of the river is all that the river is expected to carry; the flood waters belong to the country of origin. To return to the case of the Columbia river for a moment, there we find that although we receive a share of the power produced by this surplus water which goes through United States turbines, no indication of this is given in any of our statistics.