

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Turner, you are the next member on my list of those who wish to ask questions.

Mr. TURNER: I will first ask a supplementary question.

In your reply to Mr. Cameron in terms of the relationship between water use and population you cited different states and different regions.

Mr. MACNEILL: Yes.

Mr. TURNER: The Montreal Engineering Company reported the use of water to population in respect of a region with an expanding population. Surely to make a proper criticism one has to examine the same region with its anticipated population increases, which is what Montreal Engineering did.

Mr. CAMERON (*Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands*): You have just said they did not examine it.

Mr. TURNER: With great respect to Mr. Cameron—with great respect to his experience and to this late hour—the Montreal Engineering report is based on an increased population in this same region. Therefore I want to ask this witness if he thinks it is fair to question the report on the basis of population as found in several regions where, I admit, the requirements might not relate to the populations in those several regions.

Mr. MACNEILL: Yes, I think it is fair, and I dealt with this question as related to the population of the prairie region in my submission this morning.

You may recall that I pointed out that the average per capita withdrawal of water in the 17 western states was about 3,348 gallons per day in 1955. I guessed that the comparative figure for Alberta would be around 750 gallons per day. I said if we were to take a figure of 3,500 gallons per day and apply it to today's population levels on the prairies, the population of the prairie provinces being 3.1 million, we would have a water use of over 14 million acre feet. If we were to take the average per capita use of water in the 17 western states and apply it to the Gordon commission's forecast of the 1980 population of the prairie provinces, we would have a use of over 18 million acre feet, and applying it to a Saskatchewan government forecast of the year 2000 population of the prairie provinces, 6.5 million, we would have a use of 30 million acre feet.

Mr. TURNER: I have one question for Mr. Strayer because I have sat here patiently all evening without being brought into activity.

This morning and this afternoon we were discussing a legal or constitutional theory to the effect that the federal government would have the right to compel the province within the provisions of the British North America Act to accede to a diversion of water by way of canals or other specific items falling within the federal jurisdiction. I wonder whether Mr. Strayer really meant to adduce the proposition to this committee that the federal government could compel a province to act in respect of water resources.

This morning Mr. Strayer cited, with approval, Mr. Varcoe, the former deputy minister of justice. I want to read to the witness a statement in the form of questions and answers which Mr. Varcoe gave in testimony before this committee on March 18, 1955, in answer to question posed to him by Mr. Patterson:

Q. That is fine, if we can get the answer from another witness later on. Now, regarding the legal position, I asked General McNaughton this question, I believe, and I think that it was suggested that I ask the legal expert regarding the legal position between Canada and the province which might be involved. I am using British Columbia in this case because it has been referred to so much in the debate. I have no reason to surmise that it would be so, but if the British Columbia government