

Garrison Diversion

(Mr. Knowles). This is a motion, as we know, which has to do with the Government's responsibilities as they relate to Canada's intervention in the North Dakota Garrison Diversion unit.

Perhaps I should first make some reply to the remarks made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie). Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could have a little order over there.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please! The Chair has also noticed that the noise level is perhaps somewhat higher than usual in the House. It is probably due to the excellent attendance on the part of Hon. Members. However, I believe that we should listen closely to the speech of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie).

[*English*]

Mr. Blaikie: We are not used to having so many Liberals in the Chamber all at one time, Mr. Speaker, except for votes, and those Hon. Members are not used to it.

I would like to reply, Mr. Speaker, to the remarks made by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine, who has responded with his usual generosity of spirit and lack of respect for the facts. He has taken it upon himself to violate one of the most important features of the struggle against the Garrison Diversion unit, that is, the non-partisan nature, the unanimity with which Manitobans have tried to prevent this environmental disaster from ever becoming reality. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine has disregarded the power of that unanimity and sought to score cheap political points, mainly by referring to supposed or alleged inaction on the part of the former New Democratic Government which was in power prior to 1977 and was defeated in October of 1977. What the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine failed to point out was that until late 1977 all Manitobans were waiting for the report of the International Joint Commission on the Garrison Diversion project. At that point in time there was still reason to believe that whatever judgment that body made would be respected by the Americans.

We learned later, in 1978, that that was not the case. For the next four years, after we had the report of the International Joint Commission, we had a Progressive Conservative Government in Manitoba which did virtually nothing. It put all its faith in diplomatic relations with the United States. That Government said that because of our good neighbour to the south we had nothing to worry about. It displayed that usual uncritical attitude toward the United States, which did not serve it in good stead, Mr. Speaker. However, I am glad to see that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine is finally on board, that he finally has a mature attitude toward the way in which the United States of America acts when its own self-interests are involved. Finally we hear from a Conservative Hon. Member talking about a Republican in North Dakota and saying, that when it comes down to it, the United States acts in its own self-interests. That is the bottom line of American foreign policy. It is refreshing, indeed, Mr. Speaker, to hear that kind of mature analysis coming from a Progressive

Conservative Member of Parliament. That is something one can welcome hearing.

I hope I have now corrected the record for the benefit of those Manitobans who may be listening to this debate, who will actually know themselves that the present Government of Manitoba is doing more than the previous Progressive Conservative Government to stimulate public opinion, opposition and knowledge about the Garrison Diversion project. In the end, this is going to be one of the crucial ways in which we oppose this project, by making people aware of this concern and by doing everything we can to bring about an end to that project.

The motion currently before the House says that the federal Government:

—should consider the advisability of taking those measures necessary to ensure that there is no damage caused to the Manitoba environment by the completion of the Garrison diversion unit—

The important word here, Mr. Speaker, is "completion", because the completion of the Garrison Diversion Unit, as the Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine pointed out, means a melding of the Missouri River drainage basin with the Hudson's Bay drainage basin. This is of crucial concern. What is being proposed by the State of North Dakota and the United States Department of the Interior in respect of the Garrison project is indeed mind-boggling and a glaring tribute to the misplaced vanity of man. This Promethean project aims to irrigate about 250,000 acres of North Dakota soil by constructing reservoirs and dams, which will eventually, through human engineering, do something nature never intended, namely, link a southern flowing drainage basin and a northern flowing drainage basin. In effect, the Garrison project will do away with the great continental divide in North Dakota. No longer will all rivers to the north of the divide flow into Hudson's Bay and all rivers south of the divide flow into the Gulf of Mexico via the great Mississippi River. Instead, the two river systems will be linked and the waters of the systems will be mixed.

● (1600)

About ten years ago people in Manitoba who had looked at plans for Garrison started to wonder about the effects it might have on Canadian waters. The two river systems flowing north and south have very different characteristics. There are fish species in the southern drainage system which are completely foreign to Canada, and vice versa. What other kinds of aquatic life such as tiny bacteria or foreign chemicals might also be transferred into Canada by that mixing of the waters, people ask. As Manitobans started to ask more questions about the effects of Garrison, they started to get more worried about what they might be in for if the project went ahead. Manitoba politicians were soon on the phone and using the mails to contact their counterparts in Ottawa about making representations to the U.S. Government about Garrison. Talking to the State of North Dakota was one possible way for Manitobans to get their increasing concerns across, but it soon became obvious to those making the representations that Garrison was as much a U.S. federal concern as it was a state matter. So the Canadian federal Government got dragged in to help Manito-