

Water Resources

under this act will enlist and use people who possess both knowledge and concern for the region that is involved.

If something so drastic as the diversion of rivers is actually to be carried out, we in northwestern Ontario are not concerned merely with the engineering feasibility and accomplishment of something that is as expensive and vast as this; we are also concerned with other important factors such as the ecological effects, the effect on the balance of nature. What would be the effects of major diversion and storage upon river scour and deposition patterns? Would micro and macro climatic patterns be changed? Would vegetative cover and wildlife patterns be affected, and would these effects be positive, negative or both? Would patterns of water development and land use in Canada be affected, and in what ways? Can the negative effects be reduced or modified, possibly to our advantage?

One of the disturbing things about the studies going on in northwestern Ontario is that apparently engineers are almost exclusively involved. Where are the ecologists and the social scientists? Should they not also be having an important input regarding a decision to radically alter the environment of a large and important part of this nation?

I understand that this is not the only country studying the question of diverting rivers. Apparently it is also being done by the Soviet Union. A few months ago there was in a daily newspaper a small item from Paris. It raised the interesting question of diversion of rivers. This article is entitled, "Diversion of rivers could 'brake' earth," and reads as follows:

A U.S. scientist warned Wednesday that proposals to divert large rivers in North America and Russia could slow the earth's spin or make it wobble.

Dr. Raymond L. Nace research hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, said proposed river diversions to supply water to thirsty southern areas could shift weight from the pole toward the equator and slow the earth's spin.

Not being a scientist, Mr. Speaker, I have no idea whether that would be a bad thing or a good thing. It does illustrate, however, that many learned people realize that the diversion of rivers, a massive engineering scheme, would have drastic effects on our environment. If ever our fresh water is to be exported, we want to be assured that our future needs are given precedence, and that the region which I represent will benefit greatly from such exportation and will not be adversely affected. If this act succeeds in pre-

venting further pollution and restoring presently polluted waters to their original state, and if it provides for greater utilization of the great resources that we have, this government will have earned the gratitude of the people who live in the land of lakes and forests, namely, northwestern Ontario.

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to congratulate the minister on his excellent speech on November 20, at which time he introduced the bill now before the House. The minister is obviously thoroughly familiar with the problems of pollution and the devastating effect it is having upon our environment. The minister's way with words, his great oratorical ability, is all the more appreciated when one realizes that the bill he introduced to deal with this very serious problem is nothing more than window-dressing. The government's grandiose plan is designed to accomplish nothing.

One thing that can be said for this government—it is consistent. When it makes up its mind not to do anything, it does not do anything. I need only draw the attention of hon. members to the government's great plans to cure regional disparity, its promise of a just society and to deal with rising costs and unemployment. These are things this government promised to tackle. It promised them in the same vein as it now promises to tackle the serious problem of pollution.

A large number of people in my riding of St. John's West were seriously affected by pollution and the effects of it on their livelihood last year because of what happened in Placentia Bay and St. Mary's Bay. Their livelihood was affected, and indeed in many respects completely destroyed by the results of pollution. These people have first-hand knowledge of what pollution can do to them. They share my disappointment with the government's wishy-washy, meaningless approach to the entire problem. To say it falls short of the desired objective of such an act is the understatement of the year.

The people of this country were led to believe—and I speak with some authority for the people of my riding—that once enacted, this legislation would have the necessary teeth to prevent another Placentia Bay tragedy, and would in fact be capable of effectively dealing with the problems of our environment and its pollution, generally considered to be one of the major concerns of Canada, in fact North America, in this decade of the seventies. Instead of seeing presented