

*Flood Control*

hand in hand, and the lakes I have referred to are splendid examples of opportunities for such development.

The minister replied to my letter on March 14 in a full and courteous way. He outlined the difficulties facing the board in dealing with the problem. But, while I appreciate the care the minister took to outline the difficulties, the point is that from his letter it emerges clearly that nothing by way of construction will be done this year; and in fact the most that can be hoped for is that in this year a report will be made. The minister's letter concludes in this way:

I can assure you the Fraser river basin board will advance its investigations as rapidly as possible and be prepared to submit some recommendations for development before another season.

In view of the facts I have outlined, as to the likelihood of a flood this year, and any year in the future, and in view of the experience we have had, I do not think the bare possibility of a report this year, in 1949, and of no action until 1950, is sufficient to satisfy my province. Particularly is it not sufficient to satisfy us in view of the repeated representations made in the past to which I have already drawn attention.

What is necessary, Mr. Speaker, is an integrated project covering the Fraser river system, providing under one head for flood control, power and irrigation works. I should like to lay before the house an editorial which appeared in one of our British Columbia papers after considerable investigation into the flood situation of the last year. After making some considerable study of the matter, the editor of the *Salmon Arm Observer* on June 24, 1948, put forward these suggestions:

Any measures taken must include control of the headwaters of the three big rivers.

He was referring to the three rivers of the Fraser river system.

This will entail the construction of dams at strategic points to regulate the run-off.

Linked with the dams is hydro-electric development and water for irrigation. There are thousands of acres of fertile land in the British Columbia interior that can be developed under irrigation. In Salmon Arm alone irrigation would bring into production a large area now lying idle because water is required.

Flood control measures are imperative and in view of their vast implications and the cost involved, they must be considered in the broadest possible sense. Irrigation made possible by cheap electric power supplied for that purpose through making hydro development an integral part of the undertaking could bear part of the heavy expenditure and contribute tremendously to the agricultural development of the province.

Any adequate scheme of control will prove costly, but its cost will not be out of proportion to the benefits which will accrue. Millions in damage has been done this year.

[Mr. Fulton.]

In the P.F.R.A., the federal government already has the machinery necessary to undertake a flood control program. Its provisions should be extended immediately to British Columbia.

That is exactly what we had been urging for the last three years, namely the extension of P.F.R.A. in a large way to our province, expenditures by them, and the conducting of surveys by them on a scale equal to that which they carry on in the prairie provinces.

While it is true that P.F.R.A. was the agency suggested, and it seemed to be the logical one to embark upon the work, in view of the experience they have accumulated, as I have pointed out, I made at the same time the suggestion that the departments of agriculture, public works and fisheries in the federal administration should combine with the provincial government in a joint survey of the whole project.

Unfortunately, however, all that we have in British Columbia by way of an extension of P.F.R.A. to our province has been a very limited development arising out of the statement made here by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) in May of 1947, at which time it was indicated that if the provincial government put forward specific projects for the development of irrigation, and if they were approved, P.F.R.A. would be willing to assist. That obviously limits it to local schemes. There is no over-all development such as we had in mind.

The result of that was that no such steps as were necessary were instituted until after the floods of 1948 when, as I have pointed out, what is now called the Fraser river board was appointed. The fact that P.F.R.A. is not co-operating in a large way with flood control developments and irrigation projects, together with the fact, as I have shown from the minister's letter, that this board is proceeding at a snail's pace is what aggravates the grievance we have with respect to this matter.

But I do not expect the house to rely upon my word alone when I state that the steps being taken to deal with the flood situation in British Columbia are not adequate. I pointed out last year, and I remember the hon. member for Vancouver North (Mr. Sinclair) did not agree with me, that what is necessary is not dikes in the lower reaches but rather dams in the lakes and the headwaters of the river system, particularly in the lakes where, by constructing dams of a comparatively few feet in depth, because of the area of the lake involved, a tremendous amount of water is dammed back. By the construction of a comparatively low dam a tremendous flow of water is checked. On the other hand, by coming down to the river valley, where it has