

Supply—Northern Affairs

of research and I would like to see a similar committee set up to deal with the safeguarding and maintaining of our natural resources with special regard to soil and water conservation. The membership of that committee could include ministers in the cabinet whose departments deal with such matters.

Recently there was a conference here in Ottawa dealing with conservation and the use of land and water resources and a national authority to administer such a program was advocated. I would like to have the minister's views on this matter and I would also like him to indicate what steps we might anticipate in future with regard to closer co-ordination between the various branches of government at all three levels, federal, provincial and municipal, which in future will deal with this intricate and complex subject.

Mr. Lesage: I believe that this government has taken the lead in conservation. Two instances come to my mind. A few years ago this house adopted the Canada Forestry Act by which this government certainly gave leadership in the field of forest conservation. At the last session this house passed the Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act—and that was also an instance of leadership—under which we agree that we will contribute 37½ per cent of the cost of major conservation projects when the province itself contributes 37½ per cent, the local interests contributing the balance of 25 per cent. Since the hon. member has been speaking about co-ordination with the provincial authorities, may I assure him that since the passage of this act negotiations have taken place with the authorities of various provinces who have come forward with projects which are now under study and negotiation. There is fairly close co-operation with the provinces which are interested in water conservation, as evidenced by the amount of money that we have expended under the Canada Forestry Act. A wide interest has been shown by the provinces in the field of forest conservation, together with the federal government.

Mr. Hodgson: On this administration item, and having reference to the hook-up with the provinces, may I ask whether it is the province that administers this project or whether it is the dominion government?

Mr. Lesage: What kind of projects has the hon. member in mind? Does he mean water conservation projects?

Mr. Hodgson: Lake of the Woods control board.

Mr. Lesage: Would the hon. member mind if I answered that question when we reach the vote relating to Lake of the Woods control board? It is vote 312.

Mr. Hodgson: The minister may say that it is vote 312, but under vote 311 we find this: "including federal share of expenses of the Lake of the Woods control board".

Mr. Lesage: Yes; but there is a special vote. That is the heading. The vote is No. 312.

Mr. Hodgson: Very well.

Mr. Green: Item 311 covers branch administration of the water resources division. Can the minister tell us the present position with regard to the plans for using the headwaters of the Yukon river for the development of a great power project? I believe it will be one of the greatest developments of this kind in Canada and perhaps the largest in the country. I understand that there is to be 4½ million horsepower.

Mr. Lesage: 4½ million to 5 million horsepower.

Mr. Green: I stand corrected; 4½ million to 5 million horsepower. The situation seems to be rather complicated at the moment. As I understand it, the Frobisher people, through their subsidiary Quebec Metallurgical Industries Limited, plan to put their power plant on the Taku river and then to bring in ores for smelting from all over the world. However, there is another firm, the Aluminum Company of America, which proposes to use the same water for the establishment of a power plant at Skagway in Alaska; and apparently they plan to make aluminum. It looks as though the dominion government is taking one side and the provincial government of British Columbia the other. The waters are half in British Columbia and half in the Yukon. Hence if the governments will not co-operate, there will not be any scheme. Can the minister tell us what steps have been taken by those two groups and what the situation is at the present time?

Mr. Lesage: As far as this government is concerned, the only steps that have been taken are those taken by Quebec Metallurgical Industries Limited to obtain from the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources—the then department of resources and development—a permit to survey. It is not an exclusive permit and it is not a priority permit. No request for a priority permit has yet been made. We have received no request from Alcoa, the Aluminum Company of America, or from the Aluminum Company of Canada for a permit to survey. As far as this department is concerned there