

*Oral Questions*

As for crop insurance, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and myself will be meeting with our provincial counterparts on Monday for the annual federal-provincial conference, and the question of crop insurance is on the agenda.

\* \* \*

[English]

### ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

#### LAKE MICHIGAN—PROPOSED DIVERSION OF WATER IN UNITED STATES

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, my question is directed to the appropriate Minister. In light of disturbing reports from Illinois where Governor Thompson is proposing to triple the flow of Great Lakes waters from Lake Michigan into the mid-West river system because of navigation problems, why is the Government of Canada not making strong representations in Washington to the effect that this proposition is totally unacceptable because of its effect on Canadian waters in the Great Lakes?

**Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the thrust of the Hon. Member's question is a charge that the Government of Canada is not making a sufficiently vigorous representation to Washington. I do not know why he would make such a statement. I do not think he is privy to the inner workings of the Government of Canada or to any diplomatic notes that may be sent by us to the U.S. Government.

In any event, I assure the Hon. Member that the Government of Canada is taking the issue very seriously. The Hon. Member must know that there is enormous pressure from within the United States to resist what Governor Thompson is seeking, the diversion of water from Lake Michigan at the Chicago diversion point. Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, for example, have already made their opposition clear, as has the Government of Canada.

The U.S. Government has given us its assurance that we will be fully consulted at every stage of the U.S. Government's deliberations on the matter. For our part, we are making our concern known to the U.S. administration in the strongest possible terms.

#### CANADIAN POSITION

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between being consulted and making Canada's position clearly and effectively known. The Minister does not seem to be informed on his own Government's inner workings, judging from his answer. He did not answer my question.

Why is the Government of Canada not making strong representations in Washington on this matter? When will the Government of Canada wake up to the reality that, as far as

Washington is concerned, the trade agreement includes water? Having included water, the federal water policy of the Minister of the Environment becomes a mockery because of the fact that water will then be part of the American interpretation of the agreement. Why is Canada not making strong representations in Washington on the proposal of Governor Thompson of Illinois?

**Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member must have water on his brain. The proposal of Governor Thompson is to have the U.S. administration, through the Supreme Court, as a matter of fact, approve and arrange for the diversion of American water from Lake Michigan, which is totally within U.S. boundaries, to elsewhere within the United States. It has nothing to do with diversion of Canadian water, or inter-basin diversions, or water exports.

In any event, we take the matter seriously. We are concerned about the effect on Canada of possible American action on American water for American domestic purposes. In that respect, we are making the most vigorous representations that could possibly be made to the U.S. administration.

#### RIGHT OF UNITED STATES TO DIVERT WATER—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on this very serious problem. Diversions which in fact take place from Lake Michigan, as the Minister knows, would have serious and damaging effects on downstream Great Lakes communities. Does the Government accept that the United States has the right to undertake such diversions from Lake Michigan unilaterally?

• (1430)

**Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, there is a long tradition of joint management of the Great Lakes by Canada and the United States. Some decisions do require joint decision-making or some recourse, for example, to the International Joint Commission. This particular question happens to be within the jurisdiction of the U.S. However, given the spirit of co-operation over many years, in fact over many decades, in the management of the Great Lakes in general, it is expected by both parties that any decision by one affecting the other would involve the utmost in consultation. Certainly that principle applies in spades here.

In any event, it has nothing to do with free trade, federal water policy, or inter-basin diversions within Canada affecting the U.S. It has everything to do with a proposal from one State Governor, in connection with which there is great opposition in the U.S., for diverting American water from Lake Michigan to somewhere else, in this case to the Mississippi. We oppose it for good domestic reasons, and in that connection you can be assured that the Government of Canada will continue to be very categorical in its representations to the U.S.