

Supply—Mr. Dinsdale

the minister last evening. The hon. member for Kootenay West indicated that the New Democratic party was the only party with a water resources program. The minister made the same claim on behalf of his party, and of course the hon. member for Kamloops says the same for the party to which I belong.

I should like to review one or two of the statements made by the minister last night. The first administration to get to grips with this question was the Conservative party through the resources for tomorrow conference held in 1961. Out of that conference came the resource ministers council to continue this co-operative federal-provincial arrangement so that a comprehensive program for the wise management and multiple use of our resources could be devised. As an adjunct to that council we have a secretariat which is to sponsor a conference on water pollution in the city of Montreal next fall. Here is a major problem in the wise management of renewable resources and it will not be solved in one fell swoop. It has to be done by a series of programs and continuing negotiations so that a policy which is constantly up to date can be worked out.

This was the program followed with respect to the Columbia redevelopment. Notwithstanding what the minister said last night I think he will agree that during the long period when this treaty was debated in the External Affairs Committee it became clear there had been no major or fundamental change made in the treaty which was finalized by the former administration—that it was in substantially the same form as that finally signed by the Liberal administration and the province of British Columbia. The difference of opinion related to the handling of downstream benefits. The Liberal solution was somewhat different from ours, as the minister well knows.

With reference to the Nelson river, I think the minister said last evening that this program was undertaken by his administration. But I think he will remember that it was initiated by the former administration. Indeed, I had the pleasure of signing the original agreement, together with our friends in Manitoba. The South Saskatchewan dam is, I think, one of the major breakthroughs in the wise management of water resources, and this was one of the early Conservative projects.

An hon. Member: The Diefenbaker dam.

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

Mr. Dinsdale: Yes. I am sure, too, the minister is aware that while the Canada Water Conservation Act was placed on the statute books in 1954 there was no agreement carried out until the national development program of the former Conservative administration was launched in 1957. Incidentally, the January issue of the magazine *Executive* in an article on its editorial page entitled "Outlook" said this program had led to six consecutive years of unprecedented expansion in the economy of this nation.

I should like to place this suggestion before the minister. One of the recommendations which came out of the resources for tomorrow conference was that an advisory committee on water resource policy for Canada should be set up. Up to the present time no action has been taken in this regard. Now that responsibility for water resources has passed to the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Pépin), attention can perhaps be given to what I regard as a fundamental step if we are to move toward a comprehensive water resource policy and implement the recommendations of the conference to which I have referred.

There are two other matters I wish to deal with. I do not know how much time remains to me at this stage, but I should like to refer to them briefly. First I would point out that in the long run what takes place in the House of Commons and what is done by government is of little avail in improving the economy and helping to solve the social problems of the nation, unless the people we represent are inspired to take action at the local, grass roots level.

This concerns the department of northern affairs in relation to the reorganization which is now pending in various government departments. We are all aware that the Glassco Royal Commission dealt in a comprehensive way with the need for government reorganization. We are only now about to implement some of the concrete recommendations which were made in this area. However it has already been suggested that responsibility for Indians should be placed in the hands of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources so that there might be a parallel program in dealing with our two indigenous peoples whose problems are basically the same. I know that a few years ago the Indian affairs branch was always anxious to get the people who had been working in the department of northern affairs and who were responsible for the excellent education