

Supply—Northern Affairs

Mr. Pickersgill: I rather gathered that from the remarks made by the minister of agriculture in Manitoba but he was not conclusive about it.

Item agreed to.

294. Fraser river—federal expenditures in connection with investigations to be carried out by the Fraser river board, \$322,500.

Mr. Pickersgill: Can the minister say what is being done at the present time in respect of this item?

Mr. Dinsdale: The Fraser river study has been a continuing one over the past several years. I believe it has been under way since 1949.

Mr. Pickersgill: Since the big flood.

Mr. Dinsdale: Since the big flood, as a matter of fact, yes. And the present study, which is actually a continuation of the work that got under way in 1949, is merely continuing investigations of the general water control problems on the Fraser river. There is an annual report on this subject that is available to hon. members. I am informed it is not an annual report. Reports are made from time to time. One was tabled in the house just the other day, which brings the project pretty well up to date.

Mr. Pickersgill: There is no danger of a flood this year?

Mr. Dinsdale: No; the flood potential is quite negligible during the current year.

Mr. McLennan: In 1958 an elaborate report was made on flood control and hydroelectric power in the Fraser river basin. In that report the board stated that the immediate problem is the lower Fraser valley dikes. It would appear there is always enough snow and ice in the Fraser river valley basin to cause a flood if the weather is unfavourable. We all remember the disastrous flood of 1948, and the terrific property damage it caused. It is only in the real fertile lower Fraser valley that the problem of flood control assumes any major proportion.

Has the government of British Columbia made any approach to help the scheme of strengthening the dike described in the board's report?

Mr. Dinsdale: No, there has been no approach from the province of British Columbia and I think for a very good reason. Actually, the responsibility for strengthening the dikes would be a provincial responsibility.

Item agreed to.

90205-6—295

295. Contributions to the provinces towards the construction of dams and other works to assist in the conservation and control of water resources in accordance with agreements entered into between Canada and the provinces, \$1,950,000.

Mr. Nesbitt: I have a few brief remarks I should like to make on this item. They have to do with the upper Thames river conservation authority. It may seem strange to members from other parts of this country that in southwestern Ontario, which is generally considered to be one of the most thickly populated and highly developed parts of Canada, both agriculturally and industrially, we should have conservation projects. But in some respects it is probably the most important part of the country where these projects could take place. The Thames river drains 2,250 square miles of land. The river rises in the highlands of Perth and Oxford counties, which lie northeast of the city of London. It flows for 190 miles into lake St. Clair. This watershed which I have already mentioned encompasses probably one of the most thoroughly populated areas in the country and contains some of the most highly used agricultural land in the area and, of course, is full of small and large industrial towns and cities.

This project under the upper Thames river conservation authority got under way some years ago. In 1953, the first dam, known as the Fanshawe dam, in London, Ontario, was completed. Since that time nothing further has been done. At the same time I should mention that in addition the part of the upper Thames river project known as the Ingersoll channel improvement scheme was also completed, but the principal part of the project completed was the one at London. Since then the people in the area, and I know the members in the area, have been pressing constantly to have the project completed. To complete the project, the channel of the Thames river must be improved. There are two branches of the Thames river, one known as the north and the other as the south branch. They meet in London.

The first item to complete the project is the Mitchell channel improvement scheme. The second is the St. Mary's channel improvement scheme and the third is the Woodstock channel improvement scheme. Then there will be dams and reservoirs at Wildwood, Woodstock and Glengowan. Two other projected dams and reservoirs are suggested at Thamesford and Cedar creek although I have heard recently that these latter two projects may not be found to be necessary. I say "may not" because it is by no means certain yet.

The members of the upper Thames valley conservation authority are appointed from the different municipalities concerned. For a number of years the members of the upper