

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have heard about the "Basford" plan. Perhaps I could also use my three minutes to make a few remarks in reply to the hon. member, even if the question has disappeared.

In order to have a sale you need, besides an object, a seller and a buyer. A seller is somebody who is legally able and willing to deprive himself of the object; and a buyer is a person who is eager to acquire the object and willing to pay the price. In the case in point, the export of water to the United States, these conditions do not exist, at least at the moment, and will not for quite a few years to come. Canada is obviously not a seller, as has often been said both by this government and by previous governments.

The United States is obviously not a buyer. The Nawapa plan to which the hon. member referred is not U.S. policy, and Secretary of the Interior Udall on his last visit to Ottawa made this very clear. I do not want to repeat the quotations which the hon. member for Vancouver-Burrard has put on the record.

United States policy at this time is to inventorize, to recycle, to depollute and to ascertain their supply and needs. Whether the United States will ever ask Canada to sell them water, I do not know, and neither does anybody else. If we are wise however, as soon as possible we must find out what would be the position of Canada in such an eventuality.

At the moment, Mr. Speaker, we do not know whether we have something to sell. We do not know how much water we have and we do not know how much water we need. We know only that we are not willing to sell before we have a good idea what our needs are, and this is something toward which we are working. I cannot describe here the action taken by the federal government and by my department in particular in order to inventorize the quantity of water, in the oceans, lakes and rivers. I cannot analyze the past record and the projects we have in mind.

Another point I might make is this. No decision with respect to the export of water could conceivably be taken without the consent of the provinces of Canada. As a resource, water is essentially a provincial responsibility. For those people who might not trust the federal government, there is an extra security.

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

I am quite sure also, Mr. Speaker, that no decision will be or could be taken in Canada with respect to the export of water to the United States without taking into account public opinion. If it were ever decided to sell water, we will surely hear a lot from public opinion in this matter.

Mr. Barnett: What about the Columbia?

Mr. Pépin: Obviously the hon. member is preoccupied with that subject.

We are already hearing a lot from public opinion. At any rate, those are my views, Mr. Speaker. We have relatively ample supplies of water and we must use those as well as possible.

HEALTH AND WELFARE—REQUEST FOR GRANT FOR RETARDED AND DISTURBED CHILDREN

Mr. William Dean Howe (Hamilton South): Mr. Speaker, several days ago I raised the question of treatment for mentally retarded and disturbed children. More than two years ago, the Hall Commission recommended that, within six months, mental care be included under the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act, and that a crash program of services for mentally retarded children be established. In two years there has been no mention of any such action from the government.

Care of retarded and disturbed children is now the joint responsibility of municipalities and the provinces, but the job has grown far too large for them. The situation in Hamilton is typical. The mental health clinic there handles referrals from medical sources, from schools, welfare agencies, juvenile court and probation officers, at roughly double the rate they can handle. They can provide diagnostic assessment only, not treatment. As of June 1 this year, 72 referrals were awaiting assessment and diagnosis. Of these, 36 cases were considered urgent, and 10 were emergencies.

This is only part of the picture. Referring agencies in Hamilton are aware of the acute problem, and refer only the worst cases. Studies of urban mental disturbance, from a huge variety of sources, indicate that there are approximately 7,000 mentally disturbed children of school age in Hamilton—a staggering figure. These children need not only diagnosis but treatment. At this time, the mental health clinic can give no treatment at all.