

1. Continuation of diplomatic action to have the Garrison project amended so as not to affect the environment of Canada;
2. The offer of legal and technical assistance to those citizens groups in Canada now striving to halt the progress of the Garrison Diversion; and
3. The bringing to trial in the World Court, the government of the United States, should Canada be unsuccessful in its efforts to receive satisfactory assurances regarding the future safety of the Canadian environment.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure once again to rise on a motion in this House to discuss this issue, which is very important to all Manitobans. This motion is similar, if not exactly the same, as the one I had on the Order Paper throughout the last session of Parliament. Indeed, it was debated on at least two occasions. I must admit that from what you have said I am not quite sure what is wrong with the motion, but I will get some direction from you on that at another time so as not to make the same mistake again.

I would like to point out, before I get into debate, that if I were submitting this motion again I would very likely take out the third point regarding the world court. I would hate to have to see us ever resort to that, because it would be an admission of complete defeat, at which time the Manitoba ecology would be subject to the kind of destruction we do not want to see happen. In addition, given the recent American attitude towards the world court, it may not be an effective move.

In any event, I would like to point out that the very first time I took part in debate in the House of Commons back in October or November of 1979 when I first came here. I asked questions, during Committee of the Whole, on a fisheries motion having to do with the Garrison issue. It is a subject matter to which I have paid attention and which I debated in this House on a number of occasions over the years. A lot of things have changed in that time Mr. Speaker, but one thing I can say has not changed is the fact that I am still as strongly opposed to the completion of the Garrison Diversion unit as it is presently designed as I was five years ago. This issue, I believe, is probably the single most important regional issue I have dealt with during my time in the House of Commons. There is a lot at stake here. Manitoba's fishing industry could be severely damaged if the project were to go ahead as planned. Jobs could be lost in that industry and in the tourist industry. The ecology of Manitoba's lakes and rivers could be irreversibly transformed. Needless to say, it will have a lasting effect, perhaps a disastrous effect, on my riding if it goes ahead as presently planned.

In preparing for the speech today, Mr. Speaker, I looked over my previous questions, statements under S.O. 43 and speeches, etc. on the Garrison. I discovered that I had risen in this House on 14 different occasions concerning this subject. As well, I have attended countless meetings in the Province of Manitoba and travelled to Washington on, I believe, four occasions to discuss the issue with members of the American Congress in order to share my concern and the concern of all Manitobans, regardless of political stripe, on this very important issue.

Over the years, Mr. Speaker, all of us have become increasingly aware of the very delicate balance which exists between nature, our ecology, and the industrial society we have created

Garrison Diversion

throughout most of the northern world. We have learned how fragile our rivers, streams and forests are, and how easily damaged they can be. Of notable concern is an issue which has received a lot of attention in Canada in recent years. We have seen in recent years acid rain turn living bodies of water into stagnant and worthless cesspools. Most Canadians concerned about acid rain have really wished over the years, as we continue to wish today, that our neighbours to the south shared the same concern about it that we have here in Canada. The same thing applies to the Garrison issue, Mr. Speaker. It must be dealt with between the Governments of Canada and the United States. We can see that more Canadians than Americans are concerned about this issue. They do not seem to share our particular concerns about Garrison.

Unlike the acid rain issue, Mr. Speaker, the effects of Garrison would be not largely the result of chemical pollutants but, rather, of the transfer of fish and bacteria into Canada's waterways by means of man-made lakes and canals constructed as part of the Garrison Diversion unit. Let me just back-track for a moment and give a very brief history or description of the project.

It was initially conceived in the 1940s as a way to counter the serious effects during the depression of the drought on the State of North Dakota and its agricultural industry. Basically, the Garrison is a gigantic irrigation system which travels across the northern central part of that state. As currently designed, its aim is to irrigate 250,000 acres of North-Dakota soil by means of reservoirs and dams, which would eventually, through human engineering, do something that nature never intended to be done, that is, link a southern flowing drainage system with a northern flowing drainage system, specifically, the waters of the Missouri-Mississippi system with the waters of the Red River-Lake Winnipeg-Hudson Bay drainage system. We Manitobans have no quarrel with the Government of North Dakota or the U.S. federal Government planning to build such a massive and complicated irrigation system in that state. We do not object to anything the American Government wants to do on its side of the border. However, as it is now designed, the Garrison Diversion unit will not only irrigate land in North Dakota. As I have pointed out, it will cause water to flow from the Missouri River system into the Red River system. It will thereby introduce strange fish, water, bacteria and, likely, a certain amount of chemicals into the rivers and lakes of our province. That is what we object to. These objections are not only based upon a purist, naturalist obsession about our province, although we are certainly proud of our clean air and waters. Our objections are based just as strongly on the reality of the lost livelihoods which could result from the completion of this project. These livelihoods would be lost mainly in the fishing and tourist industries. There will also be problems with the water supplies of many towns and rivers which lie along the Red and Souris Rivers in Manitoba.

● (1710)

There are 700 commercial fishermen in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. They have families and they support other industries such as trucking and fish-packing. I consider these