

The problems of the great lakes—St. Lawrence are legion. The great lakes constitute such a tremendous reservoir that the flows do not vary as extravagantly as they do, for example, on the west coast. However, the density of population and the high degree of industrialization of areas bordering upon the great lakes render imperative the effective use of the water available to meet the requirements of water supply, navigation, water power, fisheries, agriculture, recreation and foreshore interests. The wondrous spectacle of Niagara Falls has to be preserved for future generations and special hydraulic measures have been undertaken.

The Saint John valley is another example of the problems incurred by man's insistent demands for energy, inexpensive transportation and recreational opportunities. Bearing in mind the multiple use of this basin, the federal and provincial governments established in March 1959 the Saint John river board. New Brunswick and the federal government are now investigating how the present and future power developments in New Brunswick would be affected by the development and operation of storage on the upper Saint John river and its tributaries. We hope to obtain a report on this subject by the end of June 1960. By this means of cooperative action with a province, we hope the water problems can be studied and solutions found for them.

In the past half hour or so, Mr. Chairman, it has not been possible to do more than to underline a few of the complexities of the water problem, its impact not only on the provinces but on whole regions of Canada, and to indicate some of the emerging problems.

It is my hope, Mr. Chairman, that this committee will examine all facets of the "water problem" in Canada. And I want to say that upon the cooperative solutions which are found will rest a good deal of the future well-being of our nation.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

Mr. AIKEN: Mr. Chairman, I also would like to thank the minister for his statement. I wonder if he could enlarge on the division of responsibility between the provincial and federal government in this connection. I am sure this is going to keep coming up from time to time, as we proceed. For an example, I had in mind the Fraser river basin, which is entirely within one province. Using that as an example I wonder if the minister could enlarge on this just a little so that our minds might be clear, if it is clear.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Qu'Appelle*): The last conditional clause, if it is clear, points up the issue better than anything I can say. We have so recently put our minds to this question of water resources and their management that the constitutional position has not been made too clear.

In answering your question in regard to the Fraser river, the river is entirely—with the exception of one or two of its tributaries—in the province of British Columbia. Therefore, it would appear to be purely a provincial responsibility. However, there are clauses in the British North America Act—sections 91 and 92—which have not been used too extensively in Canada, but which might have a bearing on it. I will read them to you, with the idea of not putting myself up as an authority but with the idea of indicating just what the constitutional framework for responsibility is.

Sections 91 and 92 of the British North America Act confer on the federal government the right to make laws for—and I quote—

The peace, order and good government of Canada.

And:

Such works as declared by the parliament of Canada to be for the general advantage of Canada or the advantage of two or more of the provinces.