

Water Resources Programs

al, then the people of Canada would have no protection so far as the export of their water resources is concerned. As I understand it, there have been no co-ordinated efforts by the government in dealing with the pollution of Canadian resources. To deal with this matter, the government has designated various ministers. It has designated the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for some purposes, the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) for some matters that come under legislation for which he is responsible, and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) to look after water resource matters in the territories. Frankly, I think there is a conflict between this act and the Northern Inland Waters Act, because both measures deal with the same waters. Therefore, depending on where the waters are located, you could have two ministers responsible for the same problem. A similar situation exists in connection with coastal waters and international waters coming under the International Joint Commission.

I am merely pointing this out to show that, at present, nobody in Canada knows exactly who is in charge of matters pertaining to water quality management and pollution control. The responsibility is left with this department and that department. At any rate, if these amendments were accepted, Parliament would have to say whether certain agreements relating to the export of resources would be approved. That is all I have to say on the subject.

I think it is clear that there are fundamental amendments. I hope hon. members on the government side will remember that before they vote against one or both of these amendments. I hope they will remember, if they do not support our amendments, that they will be taking out of the hands of Parliament the control over our water resources and placing that control in the hands of the ministry. However, if this amendment were accepted, we shall be assured that none of those accidents that take place time and again in government will again happen with respect to the export of our water resources. Under this amendment we are making sure that between one minister and another, one government and another or one government body and another, there will be no slipping through of some agreement that would have the effect of exporting water from Canada. This is not to say that under no circumstances, at no time, can an international agreement be made with respect to our water resources. The amend-

ment merely provides that without the approval of Parliament and the opportunity of public debate, no accidental diversion or export of water will take place.

We can make this water act a useful tool. In addition to what little benefit it already is with regard to pollution control, it can be a useful tool for the protection of Canada's resources. I hope this proposal will be given serious consideration before we have to vote on it.

• (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): In supporting this motion and motion No. 25, I wish to state that once more the government has shown reluctance to look very far ahead. I am not sure whether it is the fault of the Department of Justice and their inability to draft legislation which the Canadian people want or whether the civil servants are unable to interpret what hon. members on both sides of the House want. This bill is an indication that very little has been accomplished. We are again playing with words rather than doing something concrete.

An indication of how slight the change is that is contemplated by this legislation is the fact that the minister is not here, and the fact that the Parliamentary Secretary is from the Northwest Territories which will the last place in which there will be a diversion of waters. It is a long way from the problem. Most members from British Columbia are aware of the fact that most Canadians want to use their major resources for the benefit of Canada. One major resource is water. The control of water should remain under the jurisdiction of the federal government. It can logically be argued that the federal government has control in this particular field, although this control is contained in a number of different acts. We should include a clause in the water act that will affect water in a very fundamental way. One of the purposes of this bill is to solve the problem of pollution.

I think it is safe to say that if we allow a diversion of water, we will eliminate almost entirely the problem of pollution. The waters of James Bay and Hudson Bay could be diverted through Lake Nipigon and the chain of rivers in that area. This is not a remote possibility. We, in Canada, do not know a damn thing about the resources we have in that area, but the Americans do. American army engineers surveyed the water potential in that area. For the last three or four years, includ-