

● (2240)

In closing, as we are to hear from the all-purpose parliamentary secretary who tonight is covering for three different ministers, I suppose we could exchange him for a cassette tape recorder.

**Mr. Ralph E. Goodale (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, my response this evening would have been somewhat more jovial if my hon. friend had refrained from making his last comment. Once again this evening I am responding on behalf of the Acting Minister of the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc).

The Fraser River Flood Control Agreement was signed on May 24, 1968, and at that time the estimated cost of the total program was \$40 million and the cost to the federal government was \$18 million. In 1974 the federal cabinet approved an increase in the federal contribution to \$30.5 million, thereby almost doubling the available funding to this program.

Construction costs have increased rapidly in the lower British Columbia mainland area and this, along with demands from local authorities for improvements to drainage systems, has resulted in a further increase in the amount of money required to complete the work. Additional time will be needed as well, since the original agreement was to terminate on May 24, 1978.

As the former minister of the environment has already informed the House, Environment Canada has made a submission to Treasury Board for funds to cover federal-provincial cost-shared agreements on water programs. The department is working on a specific submission for fund-

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ing of the Fraser River diking project, consistent with approvals on this over-all program.

With probable financial constraints it will not be possible to provide complete protection to all parts of the valley, nor to correct inherent drainage problems in sparsely settled areas. Highest priority is being given to diking for the purpose of reducing possible loss of life and property damage. Environmental factors are also important, and conservation of areas important to wild life and fisheries and fish habitat must take precedence in some areas in determining dike locations.

Contributions to the Fraser project represent a large part of our total flood damage reduction program and are indicative of the high priority the federal government places on flood protection in the lower Fraser River Valley. It should interest the House to know that, with the works now currently under way and those already completed, a high level of flood protection is being provided to approximately 80 per cent of the residents of the lower Fraser who are subject to flood damage.

Provided that additional funds are made available, it will be possible to continue this work to reduce even further the flood damage potential of the Fraser River.

Environment Canada, at the same time, is also actively pursuing its flood damage reduction program jointly with provinces by providing flood risk mapping in the major population centres affected by flooding across the country. The department is also actively engaged in flood prevention works in Ontario, Saskatchewan, as well as British Columbia, and in planning studies which will lead to reduction in flood damage in Quebec and New Brunswick.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.