

Water Resources

However, this is a matter for provincial governments and their municipalities to decide.

Sir Clifford Sifton, who is recognized as having been one of Canada's greatest authorities on conservation, pointed out that artificial works can only supplement the place of nature in the regulation of stream flow. While the immediate works envisaged under the terms of this bill will be dams to regulate flow and lessen the danger of disastrous flash floods, it is fully recognized that the construction of dams alone will neither prevent floods nor achieve adequate conservation of the water resources of an area. The restoration of forest cover and other conservation measures in the drainage areas of the rivers are normally required. We have stressed these broader features in all our dealings to date with provincial governments. A most important feature of the Canada water conservation assistance bill, therefore, is the provision for the undertaking by the provinces of ancillary conservation measures in conjunction with projects receiving federal assistance. These ancillary measures will be carried out in all cases except where it is determined by careful study, to the mutual satisfaction of both the federal and provincial governments, that they are not required.

The importance of this provision cannot be overemphasized. It will ensure that any project to which federal assistance may be given will be a component part of an integrated conservation plan for the area in which the project is located. This provision will serve also to encourage the development of broad plans to embrace many fields of conservation in a given area.

I would like to point out that this bill and the Canada Forestry Act will, in effect, be complementary to each other in many instances. When a province wishes to undertake the construction of a water conservation project, and submits a detailed plan of the proposed over-all conservation measures in the area concerned, this plan will be studied with a view to assistance being given under the Canada Forestry Act with respect to reforestation, as well as under the provisions of the bill now before us. Where the ancillary conservation measures include reforestation, that work may be eligible for assistance under the terms of the Canada Forestry Act. In this way, the Canada water conservation assistance bill would also give encouragement to the provinces in the use of the Canada Forestry Act. Hon. members will note that the two main points of programs envisaged by this legislation have to do with water and forest cover, and that both are within the scope of the Department of Resources

and Development through its engineering and water resources branch and its forestry branch. No addition to present staff is envisaged because of this bill.

I wish to stress once again that this proposed legislation is purely enabling in character, and that it does not seek to establish any change in jurisdiction or responsibility. The government of Canada would grant financial assistance under this legislation only after a formal request had been received from the province concerned. The federal government will have no proprietary interest in any of the works to which it contributes.

We have before us legislation which would for the first time offer broad federal assistance to the provinces on a definite basis for the conservation of their water resources. If approved by parliament it will help to round out a really worth-while and comprehensive program aimed at the conservation of Canada's natural resources. As I mentioned earlier, Canadians in all walks of life are becoming daily more conscious of conservation. We already have examples of successful projects that have been undertaken in the water resources conservation field in a similar manner to that provided for by this bill. I feel that these practical examples give evidence that the time has now been reached when federal assistance on a statutory basis can be extended with the firm expectancy that great return to Canada as a whole will be received from the investment.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words in connection with this bill, although when I see the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Fournier) looking at me I feel that it is almost sinful to speak at this time.

I must congratulate the minister, first of all, on his statement and his clear C.C.F. analysis of what private enterprise has done in some cases to the natural resources of this country. This group certainly supports this bill as a further step forward in the development of what we hope will finally be an over-all conservation policy for Canada, and we are pleased indeed that the bill provides for ancillary conservation, the relation of the conservation of water resources with the conservation of forest resources and so on. But, Mr. Speaker, my main reason for rising at this time is to say that we are disappointed to know that the provisions of this bill do not include a clause to provide for river bank protection from damage as the result of erosion on navigable rivers.

I mention this matter because this question of erosion or damage from erosion is an extremely serious one to many parts of the constituency I represent, and is of increasing