

Supply—Northern Affairs

also that if it were carried through, the waters of the great lakes would be replenished. I realize also that the states bordering on the south of the great lakes are against the proposed Chicago diversion, but I am led to believe that the Chicago authorities are perfectly willing, if necessary, to pay for the water they use as a result of this diversion.

I bring these matters to the attention of the minister with the hope that his department will make an engineering survey to determine the possibilities of such a program. While this plan is at the present time in its infancy, I feel it must be carried out sometime because of the great benefit which will be derived therefrom.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, before this item carries I wonder whether the minister could bring us up to date in regard to the Holland dam, the Russell dam and diversion of the Assiniboine river into lake Manitoba? I do not think he has said very much about this project this year.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Chairman, before I answer the questions asked by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, I should perhaps refer to the subject raised by the hon. member for Kindersley, regarding the Red river diversion in Alberta.

Mr. Pickersgill: You mean the Red Deer river.

Mr. Dinsdale: I am sorry; the Red Deer river diversion in Alberta. This project has been under study by the prairie provinces water board for some time. The latest information I have in this regard is to the effect that we cannot expect anything further on the subject for several months, but I should like to draw his attention to vote 296 in the estimates, which relates to the Nelson river and the Saskatchewan river basins. The study, when it gets under way, will incorporate a study of the Red Deer river diversion.

Regarding the subject mentioned by the hon. member for Sudbury, it was dealt with in answer to a question put on orders of the day some weeks ago. I understand this is a topic which recurs from time to time and, as a matter of fact, it was fairly thoroughly examined in the committee on mines, waters and forests a year ago. After an exhaustive examination of the subject by that committee the committee made a quite non-committal report. The report stated, in part:

The committee heard with interest from witnesses of the proposed Hurricanaw river development project, but it feels that there has been insufficient basic engineering evidence presented to come to any conclusion on this matter.

[Mr. Mitchell.]

I understand that one of the proponents of the scheme has come up with a few statistics on the possible cost-benefit relations and he estimates that the scheme would cost about \$4.5 billion at 5 per cent interest over 50 years. It would take almost 300 million horsepower on a continuous basis to bring 25,000 cubic feet per second of water proposed to be diverted from James bay to the Ottawa river watershed and from there to the great lakes, and at the end of the 50 years the returns might amount to \$100 million annually. On the basis of those figures, Mr. Chairman, it is impossible to establish, of course, a favourable benefit-cost ratio.

Another difficult aspect of this whole project is the very large amount of hydro electric power potential which would be committed to essentially non-productive purposes. Therefore, in the light of all the other pressing matters of water resource development, at the moment it does not appear that this is one of the more urgent schemes. However, the subject referred to by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate does have a sense of urgency because the Assiniboine river passes through my constituency.

Mr. Pickersgill: Is that the criterion?

Mr. Dinsdale: Well, I should say from the personal standpoint it has a sense of urgency because of its location close to home. There are two possible approaches to flood control on the Assiniboine, as the hon. member knows, which have been under discussion for the past several years. The Holland dam diversion is one and the Russell reservoir is the other. There has been no final conclusion as to which is the better approach to the difficulty. There are supporters of both sides of the question. The study that is under way with respect to all flood problems relating to both the Red river and the Assiniboine river will make the final decision and the final choice in this matter.

Mr. Pickersgill: This subject is quite separate and distinct, though, from the Red river floodway itself, I understand, because the minister said the scheme itself was all settled, but he did not say that the details were all settled. There is one other question. Has the idea of diverting the Assiniboine, or any part of it, into lake Manitoba been dropped?

Mr. Dinsdale: The idea of diversion into lake Manitoba was pretty well set aside some two years ago, and at the time the Holland diversion became active. The original concept was to divert the river into lake Manitoba. It is now conceived by the engineers that the Holland diversion would be much more effective for the purpose.