

*Supply*

this field. Provincial governments are also beginning to follow this course, although few of them so far have made any environmental impact assessments. Municipalities have made hardly any.

There has been considerable discussion in this chamber of late about the James Bay power development project. In that case, a series of environmental appraisals has been underway prior to the construction of any dam. The project calls for the building of a series of dams, not merely one or two big dams. I might add that the entire schedule of building has been turned around as a result of the preliminary environmental impact appraisal, or as a result of the findings of Phase 1 of the over-all appraisal which was completed late in 1971. The development, instead of proceeding from south to north, has now been reversed and may proceed from north to south. So, already in the case of the James Bay development, environmental impact assessments have had a decided effect on the scheduling or sequence of dam construction.

Many other big projects are now being contemplated. One is contemplated in northern Manitoba. Actually, there we are faced with a *fait accompli*, although our people have been asked for advice. That project has already been undertaken. I urge the hon. member who represents the party in power in that province to see to it that that government does the same sort of thing that is being done in James Bay. Let it take environmental impact assessments seriously and adjust its plans to the findings made in the assessments, instead of proceeding unilaterally, regardless of the recommendations in the assessments.

**Mr. Howard:** Would the hon. minister care to spell out that suggestion?

**Mr. Davis:** The hon. member asked about a possible coal or lignite plant in northern Ontario. I understand that the Ontario government has already taken a cursory look at the environmental effects of this proposition. If there is some prospect of the project proceeding, we will look into its possible climatic and downstream effects. Fortunately, we employ people who are competent to make this kind of appraisal.

With respect to the James Bay project, the preliminary findings of our people are that the projected building sequence will not affect the climate of the James Bay area or of adjoining areas. Last night, I think, the hon. member mentioned that there might be a change in temperature of several degrees. Our people who have looked at the atmospheric effects do not forecast any marked change in the climate there.

In summary, we are embarked on a number of environmental impact appraisals. This is new, in that we are carrying out these assessments before construction actually begins. Our expertise is stretched to the limit, but we are doing our best. Naturally, we cannot cover all projects and study others in the depth we would like.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Chairman, may I ask the minister a question? I was pleased to hear what he had to say about studies in connection with projects. I am not familiar with the project in northern Manitoba. I presume it has to do with hydroelectric power as well. Does the Minister of the

Environment have power to see to it that land, say both in Manitoba and northern Ontario, is left in a natural and decent state after the project is completed? In other words, after the basin is built and the area is flooded, does he have authority to see to it that tree stumps and debris are cleared up? Does he have power to prevent the sort of thing that happened in the Peace River project a few years ago? In other words, after all the cutting is done and after all the levelling has been finished, does he have power to make sure that the area is turned, say, into a recreational area, to compensate to some extent for the loss of other land?

**Mr. Davis:** Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes and no. It depends on the project, where it is and what its effects are likely to be. The provinces have substantial powers in the area of the environment. For example, the provinces control land and property, and this control can be very forceful indeed. The federal government can mobilize other powers and make them felt. It can use one power or a combination of powers. It may use its powers if, for example, there is to be a substantial impact on fisheries, or on navigation. Or, it may be asked to determine what the effects will be outside the province, or outside Canada, of the development. If the answer is yes, Ottawa can get involved in the project.

It can also become involved if federal money is to be spent on the project. Strings can be attached to the spending of federal funds and so on. But there is a limit to our powers. Many projects can be carried out in a part of a province where none of these effects are observable and federal money is not involved. That environmental control is a matter for the province. Only the province can act, because, if federal action were taken the courts could rule it ultra vires. That is the dilemma we face in the setting of national standards. There are circumstances in which we cannot enforce national standards. We do not have the necessary powers under our constitution. The development in northern Manitoba which I mentioned involves the diversion of most of the flow of the Churchill River to the Nelson. It is one of the biggest hydroelectric developments in prospect on this continent.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Chairman, may I ask the minister a further question. Leaving aside the diversion of the river in Manitoba, does the minister have authority to see to it—I do not know what the word is—that, after a development is completed and the waterbed or basin constructed, the land is returned as nearly as possible to its natural state? Does the minister have authority in Manitoba and in the James Bay area, and does his authority extend to navigable water that may be contained in the flood basin?

**Mr. Davis:** Mr. Chairman, in the matter of clearing reservoirs, we do not have authority to do that in northern Manitoba. All the lands involved, as I understand it, are under provincial jurisdiction, with the possible exception of one or two Indian reservations where the federal government has authority by virtue of the federal government's responsibilities under the Indian act. In northern Manitoba along the course of the diversion of the Churchill River into the Nelson, we do not have responsibility, nor do we have authority.