

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

bit. These matters have been brought up on previous occasions by myself and by my colleagues, and I would just like to remind the minister of them again.

The first is the question of the upper Thames valley authority in southwestern Ontario, and the second matter concerns Long Point island in lake Erie. I realize that the minister is fully aware of the problem concerning the upper Thames valley authority, and I do not intend to repeat the details for his benefit or for the benefit of other members of the house at the present time. These details are on record.

I should like to say, however, that this project has been started with the construction of the Fanshawe dam at London. It is my feeling, and in fact I would say the feeling of all the people in the area, that this pilot project should be completed. The heavily industrialized and settled areas of southwestern Ontario and indeed parts of Quebec are now beginning to suffer from water shortages as a result of the lowering of the water table and soil erosion. The older parts of Canada deserve some conservation projects, I think, just as well as the new parts. Every spring the Thames river, because of the loss of the forests, floods and in summer of course the river virtually dries up. In the spring there is a flood and much valuable top soil is carried away by the water. If the upper Thames valley project were completed it would protect the top soil which is carried down into lake St. Clair every spring, and which we can ill afford to lose.

Second, as a result of the lowering of the water table in that heavily industrialized and heavily populated area there is a shortage of water in southwestern Ontario. People are having to pipe water in from the various lakes. If this project were completed the water would be conserved for irrigating farms in the summertime, particularly the tobacco farms, and there would also be a maintenance of the water supply for the villages, cities and towns.

Last, but by no means least, the lakes that would be created as a result of the construction of the dams in connection with this scheme would provide much needed recreational areas in this part of the country. For example, in my neighbouring constituency of Perth, which is represented by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, they have the Stratford festival every summer. The cities in that area are small and the facilities for recreation are limited. If the two projects which I and others have in mind were completed in connection with the upper Thames valley program, namely a dam at St. Marys in Perth county and a dam at Woodstock in

Oxford county, they would provide recreational facilities and areas for the largely increased tourist trade in this part of the country.

The federal government's share of this project has been estimated at 37½ per cent; the share of the province of Ontario, 37½ per cent; and the cities and municipalities, 25 per cent. The province, I understand, is ready, willing and able to put up its share, as are the municipalities. I would hope the minister would reconsider this matter and discuss it with his colleagues and advisers. I have heard it said that it has not been shown as yet that the cost-benefit ratio would justify the expenditure of this sum. Well, I am not so sure of that. It all depends on how you estimate the cost-benefit ratio. If you include the recreational value at the present time and in the future, and this is an important factor, I am quite sure the cost-benefit ratio would go well beyond the limits that have been set.

I appeal again to the minister on behalf of my constituents and the constituents of my colleagues in the area, who I am sure will be speaking on this matter, for immediate consideration of the completion of this project as soon as possible, because of its value from the point of view of water conservation, soil conservation, flood control, and last but not least, recreation.

This reference to recreation brings me to another subject that I have mentioned in this house on previous occasions, and that is the question of Long Point island in lake Erie. This island is a very interesting place. Once again my views in this connection are all on record and I am not going to rehash them. They are there for those who are interested to read. This island is 18 miles long and is in reality a sandbar stretching out into lake Erie. It is considered to have the best bass fishing and duck shooting on the continent of North America. This island was purchased in 1866 by a company called the Long Point Island Company, most of the shareholders of which are residents of the United States.

In the very heavily industrialized and heavily populated area of southwestern Ontario recreational facilities at the present time are limited. People often have to go hundreds of miles to find a place where they can enjoy themselves. As a result of the greatly increased traffic on our highways, this is not only a chore but is actually a hazard to a family going away for a week end. Here we have in lake Erie an island 18 miles long which is easily accessible from these heavily populated areas in southwestern Ontario and within an hour or an hour and a half's drive. We have this area with the