

*Water Resources Programs*

I believe that the two motions now under study are designed to provide for the works required in order to meet the future needs of our neighbours to the south and of Canada itself.

We know that the United States and Canada, like any other country in the world, are having a population explosion, and we can already foresee the needs for drinkable and soft water in Canada in the future. The Americans might also need to import such water and this could perhaps be used to pay back some of our debts to their country or could be exchanged for other products. I think we should support both amendments so that they might be enshrined in the act, thus avoiding any confusion.

• (5:40 p.m.)

[English]

**Mr. R. J. Orange (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** I have listened with a great deal of interest to what hon. members on the other side of the House have said regarding the two motions which are before us, namely, Nos. 6 and 25. I believe it was the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) who said that he hoped the government would give serious consideration to the kind of proposal he was advancing in his amendment. I can assure the hon. member that the government has given serious consideration to this. We have asked ourselves whether or not we are dealing with a bill "to provide for the management of the water resources of Canada including research and the planning and implementation of programs relating to the conservation, development and utilization of water resources" as stated in the preamble.

I believe that the principle of the export of water is not within the scope of the Canada Water Act which, in my view and in the view of the government, is intended to cope with the problems of water management within Canada and to establish agencies in co-operation and conjunction with the provinces to make the best use of our water resources and to meet the needs of the people.

I think also that we might look back at what the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) said. The hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) was incorrect when he indicated that the minister has reversed his stand with regard to Canadian waters. As long as a year and a half ago, the minister suggested that so far as Canadian waters are concerned at this

[Mr. Laprise.]

time, and until we know far more about them than we do, they are not negotiable in terms of any discussions with any country regarding energy. He has reiterated this on a number of occasions.

I think it might be useful to examine what this government is doing or is attempting to do with respect to the water resources of this country. In 1966, the water section of the then Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was transferred to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. That department was given the responsibility, among other things, of making an inventory of Canada's water resources to obtain complete knowledge of our needs and requirements now and in the future. The water survey team of Canada has expanded its staff over the last five years. We have seen the establishment of regional and district offices in the prairies, in northern Canada and in Ontario for the purpose of completing the inventory of Canada's water resources. At present we do not know what our water resources are. We are attempting to collate as much information on the subject as quickly as possible. Our officials in the department tell us that it will take a number of years before we are in a position to have a complete inventory, and I suggest that until we have that we will not be in a position to make any firm decisions with regard to the use of our water, either so far as diversion is concerned or with regard to export.

The amendments which are proposed fail to take into account emergencies which occur from time to time such as when flood waters are released into other countries. At that time their co-operation is necessary in order to alleviate the flood condition. They also fail to take into account our boundary waters. I believe someone referred to King Canute. How can we decide which of our boundary waters are exportable and which are not for export? I believe that this amendment does not answer this question.

It has also been suggested that possibly this bill is not constitutional, and some references were made to a document which was tabled in the Ontario legislature yesterday in response to a request of the Liberal leader, Robert Nixon. I think it would be useful to quote parts of this document to clarify points which were not made clear when the document was discussed earlier. It reads as follows:

The document questions the existence of any exclusive federal jurisdiction over waters within provincial boundaries.