

## CHAPTER TEN

### WHAT OF THE FUTURE ?

Now in the twenty-second year of its existence, the Authority sheds the garments of adolescence and enters the period of adulthood, accompanied by continuing responsibilities and fresh challenges. The growing-up era was not easy but, profiting by the lessons of the past, the Authority should be better qualified to face the problems of the future. It must, however, have the continuing support of all its member municipalities and the senior levels of government.

There is no denying that the Authority's program over the past two decades has been beneficial to the people of the watershed as a whole, but there must be no faltering now if maximum conservation benefits are to be obtained.

The agreement signed in 1961, with the Federal government, to participate financially in major flood control schemes in the watershed, was a big factor in making possible the construction of dams and associated works at Wildwood, Woodstock, Mitchell and Stratford. But the funds allotted are almost exhausted, and a new agreement is essential if dams are to be built at Glengowan and Thamesford, and if other recommendations in the 1952 report are to be implemented.

There was a time, in 1967, when the Authority had high hopes that it would be able to proceed, at an early date, with the major tasks facing it. Speaking at the official opening of the Wildwood Conservation Area in June of that year, Jack Davis, parliamentary secretary to the Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin, Federal Minister of Mines, Energy and Resources, said that a new Canada Water Act would soon be on the statute books, to cover all uses of water, including recreation, for conservation purposes. The Federal government heretofore had not contributed to the development of recreation facilities at the Authority level.

In July Chairman Bradford reported on a meeting in Ottawa with Mr. Pepin, to discuss various aspects of the flood control agreement. He said he was told that consideration was being given to a

revision of the Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act and that a task force had been named to conduct a cost-benefit study of likely flood control projects yet to be carried out on the Thames watershed.

In August, J. C. Thatcher, Deputy Minister, Department of Energy and Resources Management for Ontario, advised that his department was negotiating with the Federal department for a continuation of the joint flood control cost-sharing agreement, by which the two governments share 75 per cent of the cost of the Authority's major projects.

An outline of the situation as it now stands was contained in a letter written to the Authority on March 20, 1968 by the Hon. Mr. Simonett. It was in reply to a resolution passed by the Authority, at its annual meeting on February 15, "to press the government of Ontario to negotiate with the greatest urgency an extension of the 1961 Flood Control Agreement on terms designed to lessen the existing financial burden on the Authority's member municipalities."

Mr. Simonett explained that in May, 1967 a joint Federal-Provincial committee was established, consisting of three representatives from the Federal Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and three representatives from the Ontario Department of Energy and Resources Management. "The committee had two major tasks: to compile a manual of standards, guidelines and criteria for the development of future cost-shared water management programs and to negotiate extensions to the two existing agreements which are uncompleted."

Mr. Simonett said that the committee had made good progress in achieving its first objective and full agreement on standards, guidelines and criteria awaited only the results of some engineering studies to provide basic data. He said he would anticipate no problem of acceptance of the committee's recommendation at the policy level.

Noting with pleasure that the Authority was preparing to proceed with preliminary engineering on the Thamesford and Glengowan reservoirs, Mr. Simonett said he was informed that the committee considered the terms of reference for these studies, requested by the Authority at its last meeting. "On receipt of the engineer's reports, the committee will be in a position to proceed quickly with the negotiation of an extension to the existing agreement." Terms of reference were received in June.

Commenting on the Authority's resolution, urging extension of the agreement on terms designed to lessen the existing financial burden on member municipalities, Mr. Simonett held out no hope

for greater financial contributions by the senior government at this time. The anticipated new Canada Water Act, intended to supersede the present Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act, which limits Federal contributions to 37-1/2 per cent, did not reach Parliament before prorogation.

### SMALL DAMS AND RESERVOIRS

While awaiting the green light on the Thamesford and Glengowan projects the Authority has been active in other directions. Since the Provincial government announced its water supply reservoir program in 1964, under which grants of 75 per cent are available, considerable thought was given to the construction of small dams and reservoirs. Forty-two potential sites were inspected and high on the list for development were Zorra Swamp and Fish Creek.

Zorra Swamp, approximately one-mile square, about two miles west of Tavistock, is located at the headwaters of Trout Creek and the south branch of the Thames. The swamp represents the east-west divide of these two water courses.

On the basis of an engineering study made in 1966, when a number of alternatives were offered, the Authority favored the construction of a dam that would store 3,200 acre feet of water at a 1966 cost estimate of \$382 per square foot, or a total of \$1,223,000. The Conservation Authorities Branch authorized detailed engineering, up to the point of calling for tenders, and an engineering agreement is now being processed.

The CAB also provided a grant toward the cost of preliminary engineering for a dam and reservoir on Fish Creek. This creek rises in Hibbert Township and flows through Kirkton to an outlet into the north branch of the Thames, near Prospect Hill. The Authority now owns approximately 375 acres of land in this area and is negotiating for two more parcels. The first purchase was made in 1948 from the Federal government and the last in 1965 from Max Bilyea. The Radcliffe property was acquired in 1950. Engineering has not yet been undertaken.

Unless subsequently changed, the Authority's 25 per cent share of the cost of these programs will be borne 12-1/2 per cent by the directly benefitting municipalities and 12-1/2 per cent spread over other municipalities in the watershed. This was determined at a full Authority meeting on March 12, 1965.

Consideration is being given to the rehabilitation of Hodges Pond, on Cedar Creek, in the Sweaburg area. The property, about 90 acres, is owned by the Woodstock Public Utilities Commission, which has no further use for it. The existing dam is badly in need

of rehabilitation, but it is felt that, at small cost, Hodges Pond could be created into an attractive conservation area.

The Ingersoll Channel is also due for an overhaul. Silt has accumulated in large quantities, numerous gravel bars have formed, and the riprap around many of the drain outfalls has collapsed.

The Authority is planning a preliminary survey of Medway Creek, within the city of London, with a view to controlling a severe erosion problem.

The Cedar Creek Channel improvement program also lies in the future, awaiting the pleasure of Woodstock city council. That body, in 1966, asked that the work not proceed in view of the high cost involved.

To take care of an expanding program, consideration is being given to the construction of a new administration building for the Authority. Type of structure and location has not been determined.