River Diversion And Dam Urged To Raise Lake Levels

DIVERSION of part of the Saskatchewan river outflow and construction of a dam on the Nelson river to stabilize levels of Manitoba's lake and river system, are proposed in a report issued today by the Association for Restoration of Water Levels.

The association includes a number of Manitoba business firms, most of them in Winnipeg, whose operations in recent years have been affected by fluctuation of water levels in the province. A committee was assigned to prepare the report. It was assisted by Prof. W. F. Lougheed, of the University of Manitoba department of commerce, and by James Hercus, association secretary.

To bring up and keep constant water levels in Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis it is proposed that part of the Saskatchewan river discharge be diverted by construction of a channel across Mossy Portage from Cedar Lake to Lake Winnipegosis.

It is claimed that this would raise the level of Lake Manitoba to an effective level over a three or four-year period, and possibly maintain it permanently.

Stabilizing Levels

No consideration of power development on the Dauphin river is implied in the recommendation. When power is needed, it is suggested that a bigger part of the Saskatchewan river outflow could be by-passed through the Winnipegosis - Manitoba system. This would involve widening the proposed canal and perhaps construction of a dam at Flying Post Rapids as an additional control device.

A dam across the Nelson river is recommended as the method of stabilizing water levels in Lake Winnipeg. No suggestion is made as to location. Engineers could decide the most suitable place.

Possibilities of these undertakings, the report states, have already been demonstrated in the re-establishment of wild life marshes in the Saskatchewan river delta and elsewhere and the construction of the Fairford dam. Part of this work has been done by the provincial and Dominion governments and part by Ducks Unlimited.

Dwindling Benefit

The Fairford dam was built by the provincial government on the Fairford river in 1934 and 1935. The river flows from Lake Manitoba to Lake St. Martin. From this lake the Dauphin river flows into Lake Winnipeg.

Construction of the dam, helped by increased rainfall from 1935 to 1938, improved fishing, trapping, and even farming around Lake Manitoba. Since then the run-off into the lake has been dwindling.

An early start on some scheme for improving water levels is urged as a protection for such industries as fishing, lumbering, trapping, mining and transportation. Even air transportation companies, says the report, are seriously concerned over the low water levels of Lake Winnipeg.

The report, published in a printed 36-page booklet, has assembled a mass of data on the decline of water levels and the causes for it.