

Criminal Code

now takes samples of their effluent every two hours and reports immediately if anything is found amiss.

2. The Alberta department of public health picks up samples daily from this plant's effluent and from the river at Fort Saskatchewan about 14 miles downstream from Edmonton. Recently equipment has been installed so that samples covering the whole 24-hour period can be obtained from these two points.

3. The Sherritt Gordon plant at Fort Saskatchewan uses the water on the North Saskatchewan river for domestic as well as for industrial purposes. They are very interested in the pollution question and have been asked to report immediately if anything unfavourable turns up.

4. At Duverney another plant has been asked to report. However, they do not use the water for domestic purposes and might easily miss contamination.

5. At Lindberg (about 25 miles west of the Saskatchewan border), the Canadian Salt Company uses North Saskatchewan water for domestic purposes and they too have been asked to report.

From the above you will see that the Alberta provincial board of health has issued orders which actually have controlled the situation. You will remember that last year the pollution was noted at Prince Albert, first in early November, whereas, this year, to date, only a few days of trouble have been noted and the river is again clear. Incidentally it might be worth while pointing out that our regular tests show that there is nothing objectionable in the river between Edmonton and Prince Albert at the moment.

That was on January 24, 1955. To continue:

This means that Prince Albert will have no reason to complain for at least 25 or 30 days and we see no reason to expect a breakdown in the control machinery in the future. In addition, a system of checks has been developed which will give prompt information as to any accident and, therefore, an opportunity for prompt corrections.

In early December our check at Fort Saskatchewan showed the "typical" odour. This lasted less than one day at the point but the period of pollution widened out as it went downstream. When this was checked at the place of origin the effluent was already back to normal and no reason for the pollution could be found. According to the plant staff, to the best of their knowledge, nothing had occurred in the plant which would account for the pollution which had occurred.

However, because of this "accident" the company has tightened up their controls and the odour factor is now well below the requirements of the Alberta provincial board of health.

Our department is well pleased with the effectiveness of the control procedures which have been developed and we feel that the plant from which the "typical" odour comes is doing a very good job in controlling their effluent and we have had every co-operation from them. Certainly a very marked improvement has been obtained over the condition which existed one year ago.

We believe that the above information indicates that an adequate system of controls has been provided and that a system of checks has been developed which does give prompt warning if any of the control mechanism breaks down.

May I give you the assurance of this department that everything will be done which can be done to prevent the pollution of interprovincial waterways. To this end we are quite prepared to have our technical staff meet with yours as suggested in my letter of October 22, 1954, so that by an exchange of information the best control measures may be maintained.

[Mr. Garson.]

That letter is signed by W. W. Cross, minister of health. In other words while the government of Ontario, after having sent its delegates to this meeting at Regina on October 1 and in spite of the fact that that meeting reached a unanimous decision, did not feel that it was possible to confirm that decision by joining in this joint interprovincial—

Mr. Diefenbaker: To what government did the minister refer?

Mr. Garson: The government of Alberta.

Mr. St. Laurent: You said "Ontario".

Mr. Garson: I am sorry. I meant the government of Alberta.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I thought there was a slip.

Mr. Garson: When I said "Ontario", I meant "Alberta".

Mr. Diefenbaker: I just thought I would have the matter cleared up.

Mr. Garson: That is all right. While it had taken part through its delegates in this meeting on October 1 and those delegates had agreed unanimously to the conclusions, and while the Alberta government did not feel free to confirm its adherence to this joint control board, I take Dr. Cross's letter to be a statement that his government was prepared to do, as a single provincial government, that which the joint control board would have done if it had been set up, and that to that end he was prepared to co-operate with the government of Saskatchewan and, if necessary, the government of Manitoba.

In view of everything that has taken place in this matter up to date, it seems to me this co-operative attack upon the problem offers the best hope we have of improving conditions. While I do not profess to be any expert in these pollution control measures—that co-operative attack seems to me to involve the acceptance by all concerned, that is those situated on the upper part of the river as well as those situated on the lower part of it, of the principles with regard to the pollution of boundary waters which were adopted by the international joint commission years ago, and which have been generally accepted by public health authorities since then.

Hon. members will recall that when this matter was up for debate about a year ago I outlined some of the steps that had been taken by the international joint commission with regard to the heavily polluted waters in the Detroit-Windsor area, for example. Those principles indicate that the waters of