

*Water Resources Programs*

tion for the total federal thrust against pollution in various forms. But that was not to be. In the meantime, the government introduced amendments to the Fisheries Act which gave the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) a strong hand in preventing water pollution. We also had the northern inland waters bill and the Arctic waters pollution prevention bill. According to the government, we are also to have very shortly amendments to the Canada Shipping Act, as well as a measure with regard to air pollution.

I feel, therefore, that the main objective of this bill, as expressed so often in the House by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and others, that it would be the measure on which the pollution control effort would be founded, has now gone down the drain. This is merely one more example of the fragmented bills and acts which in the past have been so poorly enforced. On this side of the House we had an amendment that would have given the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene), co-ordinating authority in pollution control matters. This was also voted down. So, we must once again look at the management of water resources as a primary target. Water, without doubt, is our most valuable resource and the one about which Canadians are most concerned and most sensitive. Yet there is very little in the Canada Water bill to provide for supervision of the federal management of this resource. Every other natural resource in Canada under federal jurisdiction is continually guarded, rationed, reviewed and controlled by some regulatory body such as the National Energy Board, the Atomic Energy Control Board and so on.

Parliament has given the minister and his department certain broad powers over our water resources through this bill, but has set up no supervisory body to review departmental actions and decisions or to consider objectives. Amendments to the bill which would have instituted some check on water exports were voted down by the government supporters in the committee. Efforts to set up some sort of review board or commission on pollution problems were also rejected. Even provisions requiring consultation on regulations were rejected. As I read the bill it would seem that once it is passed the entire control and management of our water resources would be placed in the hands of the minister and his department without further review by Parliament or its committees, or indeed by any independent or Crown body. This is not a proper exercise of parliamentary supervision

[Mr. Aiken.]

of our most valuable and sensitive natural resource. In the case of water, I believe Parliament through its committees should regularly review water policy, decisions of the government on water management and the effects of this and other legislation on the direction of our water policy.

Surely this review should not depend on a sudden change of mind by a minister or the whole government such as took place this year. In Washington, the minister was on a continental resource policy kick. In Denver, he was a nationalist. This is surely a telling example of how management of our water resources can be affected on a very day-to-day or transitory basis. Now, we are to pass this total authority into the hands of the minister and his department. In this way Parliament will completely lose its control, supervision and regulation of our most important natural resource. For these reasons, and with a view to placing the management of Canada's water resources under the continuing scrutiny of a parliamentary committee which would be assisted by one or more advisers on a continuing basis, I propose at the conclusion of my remarks to move an amendment. This amendment is not moved for the purpose of delay or to cause difficulty. Under the rules, this is the first and only time an amendment of this type would be relevant. It is an all-embracing amendment to provide for better supervision of the administration of the water resources of Canada. It does not run counter to the act as passed but runs concurrently with it.

This amendment is very much in the same vein as the bill itself. As a matter of fact, the government may, on consideration, wish to accept the principle involved. It has been presented on previous occasions and is to the effect that parliamentary committees should have some continuing supervision and should have some professional help in maintaining the continuity of resource management. As I stated at the beginning, water is the sole and only resource of Canada which does not have continuing supervision in respect of policy direction. Therefore, seconded by the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard), I move:

That this bill be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works with instructions to amend it by providing for the continuing scrutiny of the management of Canada's water resources by a committee of the House, with a permanent staff of one or more persons to assist it, and that for the purpose of any additional expenditure, the committee request a further recommendation by His Excellency the Governor General.