

THE Sanitary Review

SEWERAGE, SEWAGE DISPOSAL, WATER SUPPLY AND
WATER PURIFICATION

THE CANADIAN SENATE AND RIVERS POLLUTION.

"No person shall throw or deposit, or cause or permit to be thrown or deposited, any sewage, offal or refuse, animal or vegetable matter of any kind whatsoever, into any river, stream or other water, any part of which is navigable, or which flows into any navigable water."

The above is the wording of a clause in a bill which recently received its second reading in the Senate at Ottawa.

If this Bill becomes law it will be the first acceptance by the Dominion of Canada of State responsibility in guarding the purity of Canadian waters.

The Provincial Government have in part shown some awakening to the necessity of prevention of stream pollution, but it is felt on every hand that the recognition of the principle by the Dominion Government will go a long way to strengthen the hands of the Provincial Governments in local legislation.

The Ontario Public Health Act, 1897, enacts Section 30, para. (6): "No sewage, domestic or factory refuse, excremental or other polluting matter of any kind whatsoever, which, either by itself or in connection with other matter, corrupts or impairs, or may corrupt or impair, the quality of the water of any source of public supply for domestic use in any city, town, incorporated village or other municipality, or which renders, or may render, such water injurious to health, shall be placed in or discharged into the waters, or placed or deposited upon the ice of any such source of water supply," . . . "nor within such distance thereof as may be considered unsafe by the Provincial Board of Health," . . . "and any person who shall offend against any provision of this section shall, upon summary conviction, be liable to a penalty of not more than \$100 for each offence, and each week's continuation after notice."

The weakness of the above provincial clause lies in the granting of power to the Board of Health to say whether pollution of the water, say, one hundred yards or one hundred miles from the source of water supply intake constitutes a breach of the Act. The meaning of this Act is literally that it may in cases prevent a direct pollution of an individual water supply, but it is not intended to generally prevent stream and lake pollution.

As an instance of the working of the Act we have the case of Toronto, where the water supply is drawn from Lake Ontario. It is at present proposed to empty the whole of the crude sewage, absolutely unpurified or unsterilized apart from the removal of from 60 to 70 per cent. of the grosser solids, into the lake at a point about three miles from the water intake. This principle has been accepted by the Ontario Provincial Board of

Health, apparently on the supposition that the point of sewage discharge is removed a sufficient distance from the water zone from which the domestic supply is drawn.

Now, the separating distance may be sufficient—we would not like to dogmatize either way. In last week's issue we published some valuable data upon the currents affecting the lake in this particular quarter, which appeared to show that the general tendency of water movement was from west to east under normal conditions, but under wind conditions the water movement was controlled by the direction of the wind. We certainly would not like to say that the water supply would never under any circumstances be affected by the sewage discharge; and it also appears that the Provincial Board of Health are also not quite certain on this point either.

The Board of Health, while allowing unpurified sewage to enter the lake, also insist that the drinking water be filtered by sand treatment, in order to guard against any chance of sewage contamination.

Where the principle of the Ontario Act appears to us to fail entirely is that it is operative only as it may, in the judgment of a few medical men, constituting a Board of Health, damage some one particular water supply. **The Broad Principle of Pure Water in Canadian Lakes and Streams is Not Recognized.**

Where the principle of the Act proposed by the Senate appears to us to be far and away more efficient than the Ontario Act is in the recognition of the broad principle of guarding from pollution all rivers, streams or other waters, either navigable or flowing into navigable waters.

We wish every success to the proposal of the Senate. The adoption of the principle as a Dominion law that it must be held illegal to pollute nature's water supply will in the end save this country from great future expenditures of money in rectifying negligence, as is so well illustrated in the older countries at the present time, when they are at their wit's end in devising methods and facing enormous monetary outlays in attempts to reclaim waters from the open sewer conditions into which they have been allowed to drift.

Saskatchewan is at the present time putting a Bill through legislative routine to guard and keep pure their water supply sources. That Government will be encouraged by the progressive action of the Dominion Senate. The recognition by law of the conservation of natural resources is always slow, and there will be plenty of kickers of the purely utilitarian school, who cannot recognize either "Godliness" or "cleanliness" when placed in the balance with the "almighty dollar."

In connection with this question of the prevention of pollution of natural waters, we publish in this issue in part an interesting paper, read the other week before the Royal Sanitary Institute, upon the "Quality of