

*Water Resources Programs*

number of impurities in drinking water, and according to a federal standard it would not be classed as pure water. Some water is suitable as long as logs can be floated in it. Other water is suitable as long as it can be used to run turbines. The quality standards would vary according to the use to which the water was to be put.

The minister should decide the kind of water control standards which should be established. Such standards should be established by the National Research Council and this scientific yardstick would not vary from province to province. It could be augmented by the controls to which the minister has referred. The controls could be negotiated because a lot will depend on the use to which the water is to be put.

The Liberal party has failed to make a number of final decisions. I hope in this case they will establish standards for water quality. I hope they will be willing to set standards which will be readily understood by all users in this country and which will be uniform in every province. Obviously, there must be different standards for industrial, domestic and recreational uses.

The minister has said that the situation in the Ottawa River is to be corrected. The pollution in the river behind Parliament Hill will now be cleaned up. The standard set for cleaning this pollution must be the same as the standard applied to Lake Timiskaming, the head water of the Ottawa River. It is true that if arsenic is put into the water it will pollute the water. If this were done on a large scale, it would be fatal. This could easily happen because vast amounts of arsenic have been sitting in barrels for years within 10 or 12 miles of this lake, and it could easily get into the drainage systems and into the water supply. Unless lethal doses got into the water supply, it would not have any effect on the pollution which the minister is talking about cleaning up in the area. Arsenic could be a very serious pollutant. The water should be protected against this pollutant in the same way we are now protecting it against mercury.

It is not good enough to say that each area or each province is going to be able to establish its own standards of quality control. There will have to be a standard which must not be flexible. Eventually the minister will be obliged to provide a scale against which the purity of water can be measured, a system which everyone can operate. Each type of impurity will be reflected by this

measure, enabling the scale to be used universally. Canada is in a specially good position to carry out this work and produce a system of classification which might be of use to other countries as well. This gives us an opportunity for leadership. We possess the technical facilities, and the variety of our resources would provide material for a complete scale covering water from many sources.

• (3:40 p.m.)

If the bill which the government now hopes to pass is intended to last for many years, surely we should start at the beginning by setting up a system for measuring water standards rather than allow a variety of standards to be set, varying from one area to another.

**Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw):** On rising to take part in this debate with special reference to Motions Nos. 7 and 14, I wish to make it clear that in my opinion the federal authorities have altogether failed to implement water purity programs for which they are directly responsible, and which they could have carried out had their approach to this question been as sincere as we are asked to believe.

The standards set with respect to sewage disposal at some of the Canadian Forces bases, for example, is far below what could be considered as meeting reasonable criteria. I will refer particularly to the situation in Moose Jaw. At the present time the Canadian Forces Base there is enlarging its sewage plant along existing lines. Only a short distance away the community of Moose Jaw has spent millions of dollars in constructing a modern sewage treatment plant which could be utilized by the base rather than allowing the sewage to flow into the river and pollute it, as is now the case beyond question. Surely, when it talks about imposing standards of water purity throughout Canada the government should take a close look at the standards it is setting in areas under federal jurisdiction. These are the first areas which ought to be examined, and where the water should be treated as it ought to be treated.

The pollution control committee in Moose Jaw has been most concerned about the situation. The bacteria level in the Moose Jaw River exceeds that which is acceptable by their standards. I recognize that the Saskatchewan Water Resource Commission says this level may be acceptable. Nevertheless, one should realize, I think, that the water in the river probably ceases to flow from the middle