

every year from water borne diseases. Each year in Canada water pollution costs us more than all the fires, floods, accidents and other disasters that occur across the country.

The bill before us describes a pollutant as any substance which, if added to any waters, would degrade or alter or form part of a process of degradation or alteration of the quality of those waters to an extent that is detrimental to their use by man or by any animal, fish or plant that is useful to man. All these words seem unnecessary to me for, in my opinion, a general description of a pollutant would be the addition of any foreign matter to the natural environment to a degree unsupported by nature.

What do we mean by our natural environment? It is generally accepted that there are three distinct areas, soil, water and air. Soil pollutants are any substances added to the soil which impair the yield or quality of farm produce, affect the health of animals or humans, or which may contribute to subsequent air or water pollution. Water pollution is understood to include any substances which render the water unfit for the purpose for which it is intended.

Obviously pollution of the air started away back in the fourteenth century when coal first became a source of heat. It became intensified during the industrial revolution, and has worsened ever since. There is some degree of natural pollution, but most pollution is of man's own making. Our affluent society produces more waste per person than ever before, and unfortunately the situation is getting worse. In fact, this bill was brought into being because of polluted rivers and lakes and pollution in our ocean which menaces our health. Fish are dying in streams and bays; scum and algae and oil drive those who go on holiday from our beaches, while tourist resorts fail, property values fall and taxes rise with the cost of water treatment. It is now a realized fact that if water pollution is allowed to continue unheeded, the necessity for the purification of water before it is fit to be used will impose an intolerable burden on all sections of our society. No province in Canada is free from pollution problems. My colleague, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath), when speaking on this measure, referred to the problems faced by the fishermen in Placentia Bay when the bay was closed to fishing and a phosphorous plant closed for a month because toxic waste from the company caused widespread water pollution.

● (3:00 p.m.)

In my native province of Nova Scotia, water pollution is also one of our major problems. There are no treatment plants, for example, for the raw sewage dumped into the ocean in the Halifax-Dartmouth area with its 250,000 population. The same can be said of many of our small cities and towns situated up and down the coast. This situation exists as a result of the fantastic cost of pollution control measures.

Just what does this bill propose to do to improve the situation? Primarily, through amendments to the Canada

Canada Shipping Act

Shipping Act, it hopes to correct through regulations the massive pollution of our environment by tankers and other ships. These amendments are aimed at establishing a maritime pollution claims fund under an administrator who will have very broad powers. In fact, as I read the duties of the administrator as listed on page 18 of the bill, section 750, he will be empowered to act as judge, defendant and claimant, depending on the stage of the claim. The man who holds this position will be required to have the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job, attributes which are hard to find among Liberal party supporters these days. Fifteen cents a ton is to be paid on each ton of oil shipped in and out of Canada by the shipping companies. I cannot help but wonder if this charge will increase the price of oil and gas in Atlantic Canada, an area which is presently suffering from economic disparity. Obviously, there is need for a fund. Why should the charge be placed on those in Atlantic Canada who are the least capable of paying additional taxes?

When reading the sections of the Canada Shipping Act that are being repealed, namely part VIIA, I cannot help but question the government's obvious inability to enforce this section of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil as set out in the convention schedule approved in 1954. I realize that the fines for polluting Canadian waters with oil were not heavy enough to pose a threat to ship owners or even to act as a deterrent, but I cannot help but question the number of times this act was enforced. In my opinion, legislation that is not enforced or is not enforceable is bad legislation.

In the bill, we read that the new regulations will apply to any fishing zones in Canada prescribed pursuant to the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act. I question the value of using fishing zones as control areas when they are in some cases inoperative. As the House is well aware, we have a Territorial Seas and Fishing Zones Act which was passed unilaterally with great fanfare in 1964. If the terms of that legislation had been implemented and had been enforced that year or even in 1965, our fishermen on the east and west coasts would not today be facing a serious decline in their fishery resource due to over fishing by other countries, as was so well depicted last evening on television.

However, the legislation was not enforced in 1964, nor was it enforced in 1965, in 1966, in 1967, in 1968, in 1969 or in 1970, and as a result of this government's vacillating and procrastinating attitude on this important matter we see our supplies of haddock today almost extinct, while stocks of redfish, flounder and cod have declined to dangerous levels.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Crouse: I also say, "Shame" along with my colleagues on this side.

This pollution control bill applies to any fishing zones of Canada. I would like the minister to describe those fishing zones. In fact, since the minister is not here, I would like any minister to describe those fishing zones.