

*Water Resources*

provinces. Of course, in doing this it escapes an onerous financial burden which it might not wish to assume at this time.

I listened with interest to the speeches made in this debate. I believe in co-operation with provincial and municipal authorities. We have had too little co-operation in the past. I am not opposed to our setting up groups to co-ordinate federal and provincial activities at any level. However, if we read the debates of three or four months ago we find that the government said there was considerable difficulty in establishing groups which could take joint action on pollution problems. As reported at page 10554 of *Hansard*, the Minister without Portfolio from Saskatoon-Humboldt (Mr. Lang) said:

Two years ago the then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, now Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin), proposed to the provinces that the senior governments endorse the establishment of a national advisory committee on water pollution, with representation from the federal government, the provinces and the universities. This committee would have included in its functions studies on various aspects of water pollution, such as regional and national water quality objectives, the costs of pollution, and the benefits to be reaped through pollution control. The terms of reference of this committee have recently been expanded to include air and soil pollution as well as water.

He went on to say:

Our proposal included an offer to finance the committee and provide it with a secretariat. Although most provinces seemed to favour the proposal, others did not. This stalemate is much regretted by us since it has blocked one avenue of joint action.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, it has blocked one avenue wherein the provinces and the federal authority could undertake joint action. This afternoon the minister told us that a committee will be set up with each province; we are to have ten separate committees. This clearly indicates that there will be many major areas of Canada wherein there will not be any pollution control at all.

**Mr. Lewis:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Harding:** There will not be any action, nor co-operation between federal and provincial authorities.

**An hon. Member:** Read the bill.

**Mr. Harding:** I have read the bill very carefully. It seems to me that many Liberal backbenchers have not taken the time to read the bill or the speeches some of them have made inside the chamber and outside it before the

[Mr. Harding.]

legislation came down would not have been worded so optimistically.

Before dealing with the bill itself, I wish to say that members on all sides of the House have said on numerous occasions that pollution problems in this nation are growing increasingly grave, as they are in other nations of the world. Warnings are coming from any sources. A very interesting scientific report from the United Nations points out that mankind is in serious trouble as a result of pollution. We are polluting our environment to the point that our destruction is inevitable unless immediate and drastic steps are taken to protect every part of our environment. Speaking on the subject of oceanography yesterday, a Canadian scientist said that unless action is taken very, very quickly, the internal combustion engine could spell the end of mankind. He pointed out that not only Canada but the whole world is in trouble in this respect.

Also, Mr. Speaker, one can readily see that there is a problem resulting from toxic pesticides. This government has given precious little leadership in the control of those pesticides which infect our environment. About ten days ago the Prime Minister said that the use of DDT was to be cut back and that the government would consider the problem of other toxic pesticides. This has long been overdue. We should have been doing research into this subject months and months ago. We have waited for the provinces and other countries to take action on DDT and have followed lamely along in the rear. We follow after irreparable damage has been done to our environment.

It seems to me that we have acted this way in almost every field. Take, for example, the matter of air pollution. What is the government doing about air pollution? One or two committees have been set up and there has been a bit of investigation here and there; but no standards are being set. Because in our country a small portion of the population live in a vast area, we seem to think that these problems may escape, may go away for a period of time. You have only to look around to see what is happening in some areas and realize how much they are affected by air pollution. Take, for example, the United States and the pollution in the Los Angeles area. The motor vehicle, chiefly, has created the smog in that area, as has industrial waste. Air pollution has now reached the point where school children under 21 years of age are afraid to exercise for fear of damaging