

*Water Resources*

I see that the minister responsible for piloting this legislation through the House is here this evening. I should like to refer him to a bulletin put out by the SPEC organization concerning what they are looking for from him. I believe they are too optimistic, but in any event this is what they say under the heading "Joe Greene is Coming to B.C.":

At the end of Jan. J. J. Greene Fed. Rec. Minister is coming to B.C. to meet with his provincial counterpart Mr. R. Williston. We are all aware of the complete lack of commitment in the area of pollution control on the part of the provincial government. We urge each and every SPEC member, their friends and associates to write Joe Greene in Ottawa immediately urging him to be tough in his dealing with Williston and Bennett. Many SPEC members say they want to do something. Here is their opportunity. WRITE: The Hon. J. J. Greene, Federal Recreation Minister, Parliament Buildings Ottawa Ontario.

I hope the minister has noted what I said is expected of him. I doubt very much whether he will live up to the expectations of the people who put out this bulletin, but I hope he will. So far I have been speaking about the reaction to the water bill and to the subject of pollution by the people of British Columbia. However, the same feeling exists in a great many parts of our country. Pollution in all its forms is a collective problem. Private enterprise has not only failed to deal with this problem but is actually the chief culprit.

If one could express in a phrase what the people in my part of the country want from the government in respect of pollution control, I would say it is an all-out national war effort led by the national government against all forms of pollution. After looking at this bill which we are discussing, it would seem that instead of that we are getting from the government a sort of quiet diplomacy aimed at gaining a truce which would be acceptable to private enterprise or, in this case, big industry. The legislation before us is really too liberal and too late. It will add another administration in respect of water control. We have many such organizations now. The Glasco Commission some years ago pointed out that in Canada no less than 168 water control administration agencies were either federal or provincial. No doubt a few more have been added since that time.

The proposed legislation will create further legislation. At the present time I believe we have four or five federal statutes, a notable example of which is the Fisheries Act. If the government had the will to do so, it could really clamp down on water pollution across

[Mr. Mather.]

the country with the authority it has. The proposals before us will mean the employment of more experts and the spending of more tax dollars for the purpose of examining the problem of pollution. But I am told we already have 13 or 14 government departments carrying on this work. This bill might have been good 10 or 15 years ago as a start along the right road, but today I am afraid it will further pollute or further muddy the waters in which pollution breeds.

There are several kinds of pollution in Canada, about which we have heard very eloquent speeches in recent days. There is water pollution, air pollution and land pollution. These are all evil and must be met by a collective plan led by the federal government. But there is another type of pollution which perhaps is equally injurious to the public. This is constitutional pollution. This type of pollution is with us and is growing through the years. We have the situation that in respect of many fiscal matters, either federal or provincial, the federal and provincial governments say that they cannot do this or that because of the constitution.

The constitution was made for Canadians; Canadians were not made for the constitution. I contend that if the present majority government had the will, it could control pollution under existing legislation. However, if it does not think it can, I would suggest that it has just as much a responsibility in this regard as it has for pollution by liquor in respect of drinking drivers. Action in this regard was taken recently under the amendments to the Criminal Code. I suggest that the government equally has a responsibility in respect of pollution of water.

If we can outlaw pollution by liquor, why can we not at the same level outlaw pollution by water? The federal government could rally the whole country behind it, if it would declare war on pollution of air and water. The public is sick of talk, delay conferences and workshops. The public is anxious, ready and calling for action at the national level for clean air and water. The people want a massive national attack on pollution. Having in mind what it did in respect of liquor pollution, I am sure that if this government gave the people of Canada the same kind of leadership in the area of pollution, about which so many thousands are concerned, it would do a great deal for national unity in this country.

● (9:40 p.m.)

It is at this level, the level of a common denominator among our problems, that the