

Northern Inland Waters Bill

tionship between the inland water and the internal water because of the various forms of fishery in the area, particularly the salmon and shellfish fishery. One need think only of the interesting fishery resource of the north, the Arctic char, to realize that water quality management—if that is what we are to be concerned about in relation to the Arctic char—is important not only in relation to inland water but certainly also the internal water of Canada.

In conclusion, and without indulging in a repetitious argument on the broader question raised by the hon. member for Peace River, I submit that the question of jurisdiction over the water lying between the islands of the Arctic archipelago is one which is important and very relevant to this bill, and one which I hope the minister and his departmental officials will consider very carefully before this bill proceeds beyond the committee stage.

There are one or two points in relation to the broader aspects of the bill which I should like to raise. I refer to the rather extravagant claims made by the minister in the opening paragraphs of his speech. He claimed that this bill, in effect, will solve the problem of protecting and conserving the ecology of the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. At the outset he made some reference to his pleasure in having announced something potentially dangerous in respect of pollution, and in the next breath that certain steps will be taken to clean up the mess caused by oil in the Arctic.

The minister is much more extravagant in his claims in respect of this bill than his colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) was when he introduced the Canada water bill in so far as it being an anti-pollution or pollution-control measure. I submit that basically this bill has the same failings the Canada water bill had in terms of pollution protection. The fact is that we are dealing with an area where constitutionally there really is no division in respect of the control of resources. Therefore one could argue that in the introduction of this kind of bill in relationship with, and in my view as a companion piece of legislation to the Canada Water Act, we have a unique opportunity of doing something which the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources might argue is difficult to do under the Canada Water Act, because of constitutional problems. I am talking about the setting of standards.

[Mr. Barnett.]

• (4:10 p.m.)

In both of these bills what, in effect, we in this Parliament are saying is that we are going to turn over to bureaucratic control and direction, to the people who have narrow technical expertise, the whole question of deciding, what are going to be the standards of water quality, with no general terms of reference.

There is a clause in the bill, as there is in most bills, which gives the Governor in Council power to make certain regulations. One part has to do with regulations concerning:

—prescribing water quality standards for water management areas that are not, or are not included in whole or in part within, a water quality management area designated pursuant to the Canada Water Act;

There, Mr. Speaker, we are adding two more to what was formerly at least ten dimensions of water quality standards, you might say, because conceivably under the operations of two separate water boards there could be different standards in the Yukon as compared with the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chrétien: Just for information purposes I would like to point out to the hon. member that the minister has power to establish standards through Order in Council, and these standards will apply to the both territories. So, it is not a question of duplication. It is mentioned in the bill that we will conform with the standards or regulations of the Canada Water Act.

Mr. Barnett: Yes, Mr. Speaker, but what is the standard set under the Canada Water Act? That is the whole point we have been arguing since that Act was introduced. It makes no provision for standards that are uniform across Canada. This is the whole argument with the minister's colleague.

Mr. Chrétien: There would be standards in the north through regulations.

Mr. Barnett: All right. The minister says there will be standards in the north through regulations, but they may be different from the standards of water management in the province of Quebec or British Columbia. This is the argument. There is no yardstick. There is certainly growing evidence of public interest and concern in this field. The citizens of Canada should have a yardstick somewhere by which they can measure the performance of these various boards and bureaucracies that are going to be set up, whether in the north or other parts of Canada.