

Fisheries Act

I would also question the penalties for depositing or permitting the deposit of wastes in water. In the event, with all this fragmentation of authority, that a charge could be laid, I note that the bill calls for punishment in the form of a fine not exceeding \$5,000 for each offence. This could be taken to mean that one day's discharge of waste into a Canadian lake or river could kill all life in that water and that the penalty for the offence would be only \$5,000. This penalty is too limited for a large company. After all, is the price of a Canadian lake or river only \$5,000?

Mr. Lundrigan: Like Long Harbour.

Mr. Crouse: Yes, as my hon. friend says, like Long Harbour. There was an instance of pollution which has destroyed the ecology of the area. Although efforts have been made to restore the fisheries, those of us who are familiar with the fisheries and have had a long time association with the fisheries know that it will be many years before we have fully recovered from the effects of the pollution of Long Harbour, Newfoundland.

We must be realistic about pollution. Let us be realistic about its effects on our environment. I ask the members of this House to think about the problem. Let us ask ourselves: Who are the main polluters in this nation? The answer, of course, Mr. Speaker, is you and I collectively, under a term called the "municipality". Our municipalities, with their sewage and garbage disposal problems, have been the greatest polluters of our rivers, lakes and streams. Especially is this so when cities and towns are located quite close to any given body of water. How do you propose to force the municipalities to act under this legislation. And if they do not act because of a shortage of funds, who are you going to fine—the mayor, the town clerk, the chief of police or the garbage collector? I suppose it would be the latter, since he is more closely associated with pollution!

• (3:50 p.m.)

But, Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter, since all municipalities located on water bodies are constantly pouring phosphates into the waters. We are now saying, under a troika of authority, that the polluter must pay. Since the government has intentionally divided our pollution control authority, I believe that the enforcement of the clauses of this bill will be extremely difficult. The answer, of course, lies in a common sense approach to this problem. There is one minis-

[Mr. Crouse.]

ter on that side of the House, the Minister of Fisheries, who has a solution for the control of our pollution difficulties, but unfortunately he apparently lacks the required support of his colleagues on this important matter.

I say that the Minister of Fisheries has a solution to our pollution control problems because he expressed certain views in his speech entitled "Pollution and the Fisheries Act" as delivered before the Rotary Club of Hamilton on Thursday, May 22, 1969. In that speech, which indicates considerable research, the minister pointed out the manner in which the federal Fisheries Act could be used to bring pollution under control. He was talking, of course, entirely about pollution in water where fish react to poisonous substances. To use his words, they go belly up before human beings take sick, so strict laws protecting our fisheries should be our first line of defence against pollution and our first line of defence of human health and welfare as well. I endorse the minister's remarks because salmon will refuse to swim in water before we humans refuse to drink it. When we see fish dying in rivers and lakes, the waters of which are being utilized as sources of supplies for cities or towns, it would be wise for the authorities to examine the quality of that water to determine what has happened to it.

After describing our water problem, and after pointing out that it is quality and not quantity which we require for our well being, the minister stated, and I quote now directly from his speech:

We in Canada are fortunate. We are fortunate in that we have a clear cut avenue for federal participation in the battle against pollution. We are fortunate in that we have an effective tool in the Fisheries Act. The Fisheries Act, as it happens, is nearly as old as Confederation itself.

He repeated some of those words today in his speech. He went on to state:

It pre-dates most provinces—and it certainly pre-dates provincial legislation with respect to water quality and pollution control.

Most provincial legislation has been framed with our federal Fisheries Act in mind. Our provincial acts, in other words, surround the federal Fisheries Act, embroidering it so to speak. But provincial laws and provincial regulations must take second place to the Fisheries Act in any case—for fisheries are federal under our constitution.

The minister continued by stating that we are fortunate as compared to the United States, where fishery matters come under the individual states. This makes it more difficult for Washington to co-ordinate activities since their authority is limited to international treaties and the like. He pointed out that in