

*Water Resources Programs*

Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken), I think I might suggest that the basis of this bill is co-operation between federal and provincial governments. The fact is that the entire concept of water management areas, water basins, depends on the relationship which must and will develop between the various levels of government.

In his amendment the hon. member has said, and I quote:

(2). Before any such regulation is made, the minister shall first give notice thereof to the provincial governments, representatives of any industries directly affected, and such organizations of citizens as the minister deems appropriate.

I am not too clear about the effect of an amendment with this wording, Mr. Speaker. I am not a lawyer but it seems to me that to instruct the minister to consult with people, governments, organizations or industries in those circumstances he deems appropriate, is really to say to the minister, "we want you to consult on every occasion but we do not bind you to consult on every occasion." I am convinced that in order to make the Canada Water Act an effective instrument of water management in Canada there must and will be consultation between the federal government, the provincial governments, the industries affected, organizations and others involved.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should just like to go back to the provision for the establishment of water agencies which describes how a comprehensive water resources program is to be established. Clause (4) of the bill reads:

(d) formulate comprehensive water resource management plans, including detailed estimates of the cost of implementation of those plans and of revenues and other benefits likely to be realized from the implementation thereof, based upon an examination of the full range of reasonable alternatives and taking into account views expressed to the body by persons likely to be affected by implementation of the plans.

An amendment suggested by the committee was that public hearings would, in effect, accomplish one of the objectives suggested by the amendment now before us. I believe a good example of the problems related to phosphates was the situation in which the minister, together with his departmental officials, indicated that he wished to bring forward problems for consultation with the people affected. In November of 1969, when the subject of phosphates and their effect on the lower Great Lakes came into the open, the minister called in the soap manufacturers and suggested to them that there should be a

change in the manufacturing formula to reduce the amount of phosphates in detergents. He had indicated that he intended to change the regulations and, if necessary, bring in legislation which would control and restrict the use of phosphates. At the same time, he gave them the opportunity of coming up with their own formula on how this might best be accomplished.

It seems to me that this is an example of consultation. The minister acted unilaterally in February when he indicated that there would be amendments to the Canada Water Act in committee to control the use of phosphates in detergents. There was consultation with the provincial governments with respect to this particular program. It seemed that the reaction of the provincial government was to the effect that if this is good for Canada it is best that the action be taken by the federal authority. I believe that regardless of what has been indicated here, the minister is prepared to consult on the establishment of all regulations that affect the waters of our country. It is unfair and incorrect to suggest that the minister will not consult. The whole concept of our water management agencies is that there will be consultation with the people in the area of the water basin affected, from the establishment of a federal-provincial agreement to the organization of the water basin agency which, as we know, will consist of representatives from the federal and provincial governments together with representatives of the local area. There will be consultation.

• (5:00 p.m.)

In the committee discussions with respect to the bill, there is no doubt that there was concern on the part of committee members to ensure that there would be consultation and an involvement of the people in the area affected. This amendment reiterates what has already been said in committee. The indication of the minister and the government is that there is consultation now and that there will be consultation in the future. Evidence was presented to the committee that consultations have already been undertaken with the provinces with regard to the establishment of water management agencies throughout Canada.

As an example, there is the Okanagan-Shuswap agreement between the province of British Columbia and the government of Canada to establish a water management agency. An investigation into the uses of the