

representatives of opposition parties in the legislature pressed the administration to bring in laws against air pollution, but all their efforts were unsuccessful. To me, this failure by the government to take action amounts to sheer stupidity. But that is what happened. Members of all parties gave instances of spawning beds being harmed by the pollution of some of our great rivers and streams. In my own area of Kootenay West, one of the most beautiful parts of Canada, sections of the Kootenay river are so polluted that health authorities have issued warnings against using the water or even swimming in it. I presume the fish are seriously affected.

This is not an isolated case. This is happening in every province in Canada. It is happening because we have failed to take time out to study this problem and make certain that we are in a position to force individuals, industries and government, too, to adhere to certain strict principles which we in Ottawa should be prepared to lay down.

In closing I should like to say I have a vast amount of material on this subject together with a long list of solutions, or suggested solutions, which I should like to put before a committee or before this house when a suitable opportunity occurs. We cannot afford any delay in tackling this problem. Whether the job is done in a special committee or in the committee on natural resources, it must be carried out, and I urge members of this house, particularly supporters of the government, to insist, regardless of what those on the treasury benches may think, that a committee be set up to look into this problem and propose legislation for enactment before the first session of this parliament is completed in June.

I urge hon. members to support action along these lines to see whether we cannot make 1969 the year in which we really made a start in trackling the pollution hazards which confront the Canadian people today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Ray Perrault (Burnaby-Seymour): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend my colleague from British Columbia for his action in putting forward this resolution. I think the interest he shows in this subject is shared by all members of the house.

Since I, too, have had the pleasure of serving in the British Columbia legislature, I was particularly interested in certain of the remarks made by the hon. member who has

just resumed his seat. Having sat in the legislature with him for a number of years, let me say I find myself in agreement with many of the sentiments he has expressed regarding the lack of activity in our province when it comes to measures against pollution.

It is a paradox that a society which has witnessed such enormous advances in technology, science and health standards should witness at the same time a proliferation of pollution in all its forms. To a large degree, society seems to be frustrated by this problem. Waste of all kinds pollutes our air, our soil and our water. I note that the resolution makes no reference to soil pollution, though soil pollution can be extremely serious in its effects. We have experienced a serious case in British Columbia in recent years in the Grand Forks area, and I hope that if we do form a committee and if a major study is undertaken, soil pollution will be included in the terms of reference.

As our population grows and living standards rise, there will be more waste and more pollution. This situation must be dealt with. Those who are denied pure water, pure air and clean soil have little patience with the endless constitutional dialogue, important as that dialogue may be. They want pollution control and they do not want buckpassing. Surely a just society is, among other things, a society which does not penalize any of its citizens by obliging them to live in a polluted environment.

In years past little public attention was paid to pollution. The standard reply of many, given to those who did complain about it was: the smell of pollution is the smell of money. We know now that in economic terms alone, apart altogether from considerations of health and aesthetics, the money price has become too high. We know now that unsafe, unclean water, whether consumed directly or sprayed on crops, poses a serious health hazard. The same applies to the improper use of pesticides, or to polluted air. No one can condone air pollution which may cause chronic bronchitis or emphysema, or the pollution of water which may cause even more serious disabilities. As to air pollution, industrial smoke and dirt are the most obvious targets for control. But the jet age has brought new problems. People talk about building new jet-age airports, despite the fact that these are now considered by some authorities as likely to become a serious source of air pollution.