

Air Pollution

this party would be quite prepared to give consent at the appropriate time to a motion to refer this bill and the others alluded to by the hon. member for consideration by the standing committee. If such a motion is moved, we will support it.

I am not in any sense taking credit away from the hon. member for raising this matter, and I do give him due allowance, but I would hope that when matters of equal importance are raised by members of this or the other opposition parties there will be equal willingness on the part of the government to refer them to the appropriate standing committees for consideration. I recognize that this cannot be done with all public bills, but I believe it is a practice to be desired. I hope the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) and his colleagues will read my words so that at the appropriate time when bills are introduced from this side of the house this practice will be followed.

I wish to comment on the constitutional difficulty which prevails in connection with the very serious problem of air and water pollution. They are both in the same category. We are approaching the time when they will be the most serious environmental problems we will have to face. While the provinces obviously have jurisdiction to deal with this problem under the heading of property and civil rights, because there is an interprovincial and international aspect and because finances are involved it is not possible for the provinces to do so.

Bearing in mind what happened at the recent constitutional conference, I cannot see the provincial or the federal governments abandoning their particular jurisdiction and handing it over to the other government. This is a situation where there will have to be co-operation. Constitutionally, a corporation could be established to which each of the two government levels could delegate authority. One government cannot delegate authority to another government. The province of Ontario could not delegate authority to the federal government on a matter over which it has complete jurisdiction, and vice-versa, but authority could be delegated to a Crown corporation.

We in this party have pointed out the necessity of establishing a parliamentary committee to deal with problems of this nature. A parliamentary committee is a forum where the wishes of the people, through the liaison of members of parliament, could be brought forward and pressure exerted not only on the

federal government but on the provincial governments. Responsibility for the serious problem of air and water pollution could be allocated to one agency which would not only punish infractions of law but would regulate. The problem is that the federal government simply cannot regulate. It can only provide financial incentives and make proposals.

Clause 3 of Bill C-22 reads in part:

It shall be the duty of the minister to consider the expediency of:

(a) promoting co-operative activities of municipal, provincial, interprovincial, federal, and international governments—

That is not good enough. When we look at federal-provincial conferences and see how little progress is made, it becomes essential that some other forum must be established. The wishes of the people must be expressed forcibly to the members of that forum, in this case a parliamentary committee in order to demand that they be enforced. The hon. member's bill will give the committee an opportunity to study its merits and to look for ways and means to accomplish what he proposes.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz) for his foresight and imagination in presenting this bill. I extend the same congratulations to other members of the house who have placed notice of similar bills on the order paper. I hope the house will agree to refer the subject matter of all these bills at the end of this hour to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

• (5:30 p.m.)

I may say to the hon. member for Parkdale that I wish him good luck in his effort. I speak as one who has had the experience of having to introduce bills eight, ten or 12 times before the principle of them has been finally accepted. There is an urgency about this matter which makes me hope the hon. member will not have to wait so long. I am sorry, as a matter of fact, to note the dilatory way in which the government is dealing with this matter. Despite the fact that many references have been made to the need for legislation respecting clean air, clean water and clean cities, we have not had anything yet from the federal government on this subject except the promise that a clean water bill or Canada water bill will be exposed at this session. In other words, this bill will receive first reading but it is not intended that we go any further during this session.