

*Criminal Code*

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Before the minister proceeds, would he allow a question? Does the minister realize that within the last few days Premier Manning of Alberta has announced that he will not make an appointment to such a board because to do so would place authority over the province of Alberta in a board composed not only of members from Alberta but from the other two provinces?

**Mr. Garson:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I realize that, and I am coming to that point. First, however, I want to satisfy my hon. friend, if I can, on the point that arising out of these meetings a course of actual conduct is being carried on in relation to the waters of the North Saskatchewan river which in my judgment is infinitely more effective than any results which could be obtained by the passage of my hon. friend's bill and by criminal prosecutions thereunder.

There was agreement at this Regina conference of October 1, 1954, that there would be a technical staff for the proposed joint pollution control board composed of a senior public health engineer, a chemist and a clerk-stenographer, and the duties of these officials were outlined.

Now, it is quite true that subsequently the government of Alberta, as my hon. friend from Prince Albert has just stated, signified its unwillingness to join in the setting up of this joint board. But before I come to the statement of their position I think first I should place on the record an official statement which was supplied to me by Hon. T. J. Bentley, minister of public health for Saskatchewan, as his conception of the function which this joint pollution control board would perform. I am now quoting:

It was conceived that this board would examine interprovincial stream pollution in a comprehensive fashion by selecting priorities of water use, assessing and co-ordinating all data pertaining to wastes and polluting substances, recommending suitable corrective action and conducting an educational campaign on the logical conservation of our invaluable water resources.

This was back some time ago and the statement goes on to deal with this matter concerning which Mr. Bentley was keenly disappointed by actions of the Alberta government, confirmed by Premier Manning in the communication to which my hon. friend from Prince Albert has just referred. I quote further from Hon. Mr. Bentley's statement:

The government of Saskatchewan was keenly disappointed when it learned that Alberta was not prepared to accept this proposal for a co-operative joint control board. A counterproposal for the establishment of an informal committee to meet occasionally as problems arose was considered—

That is, by the government of Saskatchewan—

—to be utterly inadequate.

Further, the government of Alberta's assurances that it would do everything in its power to prevent the occurrence of any pollution, while welcomed, could not be accepted as a suitable substitute for a joint board designed to launch a comprehensive attack on the problem. A pollution episode as recent as January 3, 1955, at North Battleford and January 7, 1955, at Prince Albert adds additional evidence to the view that a joint control board is necessary.

Consequently on January 18, 1955, Dr. W. W. Cross, minister of health for Alberta, has been requested to ask his government seriously to reconsider this proposal. Willingness of Alberta to discuss the creation of a joint control board would demonstrate its willingness to co-operate in finding permanent solutions for pollution of interprovincial streams.

I think it is only fair to also place upon the record the reply of Hon. Dr. Cross to this suggestion which was made by the government of Saskatchewan. Dr. Cross's reply takes the form of a letter dated January 24, 1955, addressed to Hon. Mr. Bentley, which reads as follows:

I have your letter of January 18, 1955, regarding the pollution of the North Saskatchewan river and I believe it would help if I were to explain the procedures that are in effect in the Edmonton vicinity for the control of pollution.

We are paying attention to a number of sources of possible pollution but as you are aware we are most interested in a particular material or group of materials which caused trouble one year ago. It is believed by the engineering staff here that this problem arises from one chemical plant and the odour is spoken of here as the "typical" odour.

Aimed at the control of pollution, an Alberta team has been watching the North Saskatchewan river since 1950 and has collected a lot of useful information which has been supplied to your division of sanitary engineering and to the federal authorities. This team was enlarged last winter and additional help was obtained from the department of national health. Resulting from the work of these teams, specific orders were issued to a number of industrial plants in the Edmonton region and to the city of Edmonton.

Edmonton, by the way, would not be affected at all by my hon. friend's statement.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** What was that observation?

**Mr. Garson:** My observation was that when Dr. Cross in his letter stated that specific orders were issued to a number of industrial plants in the Edmonton region and to the city of Edmonton, it was the city of Edmonton which would not be affected at all by the amendment of my hon. friend from Prince Albert which we are now considering. Then I continue with Dr. Cross's letter:

To see that these requirements are met a number of checks have been established.

1. The various companies have been asked to report promptly any failure in their control machinery. The particular company which was considered to be the source of last winter's problem