

Government Organization Act, 1970

These organizations believe if there are not national standards, the municipalities and the provinces will pay less attention to pollution standards than they might if there were a national policy in effect.

One of the important elements that came across at this hearing was the fact that the nation requires national leadership in respect of pollution control. Let me use as an example some of the municipalities which have in the past adopted municipal regulations. When they were asked to enforce their regulations they were confident that they would have the co-operation of the various industries involved. I am sure everyone here is aware of this situation. At the same time, I think the municipal or provincial people would deny that there should be this type of national legislation in this field, although they admit that there should be this type of leadership.

I can't understand why the minister refers in the same terms to the clean air act and to the national emission standards act, about which he spoke a while ago. It would seem to me that if he is prepared to put the national emission standards act and the clean air act before the House, this means that we are taking over the destiny of our own country as far as clean air is concerned. By the same token, we should put the word "national" in clause 6 of this bill.

We find that now we are talking about a national clean air act, and if we leave out the word "national" we will have a lot of people complaining about the reference to two separate acts. I still fail to understand why the minister would suggest that it would be difficult to include the word "national" in this bill as suggested by the hon. member for Kootenay West. I suggest that we included the word "national" in the clean air act we should include it in this measure in order to make this clause clear. It seems to me that control of air pollution internationally is as important as control of any other kind of pollution internationally or nationally.

The Chairman: Is the committee ready for the question?

Mr. Bell: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the minister to give us some information in respect of the observations that were made yesterday during a very eloquent speech by the Minister of Transport. He said we should draw a happy balance between correct industrial growth and pollution control. I noticed that he threw out a challenge to engineers and the news media for assistance in securing a moral approach by industry. I am wondering whether he anticipates a danger of an over-reaction in respect of this whole business of ecological control, or whatever the correct term is.

I feel that in Canada we should appreciate the fact that in the United States, at every level of government, there does not seem to be the slightest attention being paid to port and industrial development. They seem to have gone wild in this area of ecological pollution control. It is impossible to obtain an orderly industrial development program. I should like the minister to take a minute or two to express his views on this aspect. Will it be possible for Canada to regulate pollution control in respect of industrial development. We are aware of great industrial

growth and the continuation of this growth. I hope we do not lose everything in our mad dash to set up these controls.

I should like to ask the minister whether he has any thoughts in this regard, and whether he has a policy for the education of people, so we do not build up in our minds a fear which will prevent us from sitting down for a moment and thinking over a sensible approach to this pollution control problem. In eastern Canada, we are interested in port development and industrial growth. We believe in pollution control but, at the same time, we want to strike a happy balance such as the Minister of Transport referred to in his eloquent speech yesterday. I hope the minister will indicate that there will be an educational program to prevent people in this country from over-reacting to this whole business.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Peace River has quite rightly expressed the fact that the people of Canada are looking to the national government for leadership in the battle against pollution. I think it is up to us in this Parliament and this government to provide that leadership. The hon. member raised one difficulty, if I might call it that, which is the result of our present constitution. He referred to the possible difficulty of implementing international treaties entered into by the government of Canada with governments of other nations. To paraphrase his words, he suggested such treaties might not be enforceable because the provinces have certain powers of their own which are not enforceable by the federal government.

The hon. member may not have read the press release on policy from the last federal-provincial conference, but there was a federal proposal to the provinces which has been studied by the provinces on which there was some acceptance. The federal proposal involved a concurrency of powers in respect of environmental control. If the proposal made by the federal government was adopted by the provinces, it would help to clear up two difficulties; one involving the enforcement of legislation for the protection of the environment stemming from international agreements treaties. The other would help to clarify interprovincial boundary situations, which I gather are also uncertain from a legal or constitutional point of view in this country.

In other words, a proposal has been put forward by the federal government which has been considered at a federal-provincial conference, and which will again come up for review in June, 1971. We are looking at it from a national point of view, from the point of view of enforcing high standards interprovincially right across Canada, and also internationally in a binding way as between Canada and other nations.

● (3:50 p.m.)

The hon. member for Moose Jaw stressed the need for national standards and international standards. I agree 100 per cent with everything he said in that regard. He asked how we might project the new clean air bill into the international arena. Given flexibility in the terms of reference of the new department of the environment we