for the optimum benefit of those who would use this precious heritage today and who will require it in our tomorrows.

[*English*]

Yes, Mr. Speaker:

The tide of public opinion has risen sharply on this issue and we must, as Shakespeare warned us, take it "at the flood" for if we do not do so now we shall indeed, in the words of the Bard, find our lives "bound in shallows and in miseries."

How did all this happen? How has this most urgent of national problems arisen in this, as well as other, lands? At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when all of Canada was sparsely populated and none of her waters congested, there was water enough to drive logs, turn water-wheels and provide fish for our ancestors. But I have mentioned already, Mr. Speaker, our ancestors were then few, and the industries were indeed tiny. Waste, both human and industrial, was swallowed up by our rivers and quickly purified.

But as the population grew, villages expanded into cities and little saw mills became huge pulp and paper factories. However, our attitudes with respect to water and our practices did not change thereby. The new cities assumed that the nearby waterbody could still easily dispose of their waste, and they dumped in their leavings, in new abundance and untreated. Small industries, grown large, assumed that because a river could handle a few tons of sawdust and bark chips a day, it could as easily handle several hundred tons of wood fibres and sulphite effluent. More industries and more cities joined those already there. Hydro plants converted the fast flowing rapids, which rivers once used to cleanse themselves, into stagnant head-ponds, and each time another rapid was castrated bringing more hydro power, we cheered—and called it progress.

• (3:40 p.m.)

The process went on and on with few attempts to alleviate it—and few people really cared. Until one day in the late 1960's, we awoke to find parts of the great lakes choked with the algae grown on the phosphates from millions of automatic washers. Then, we paused and rubbed our eyes and looked at the Ottawa River flowing by the very windows of our own Parliament Buildings. Once the noble and mighty, roaring stream that Champlain saw had now turned into something short of a waste disposal ditch.

[Mr. Greene.]

I believe we now realize that we have all erred. We have failed to plan the use of our waters. The time has surely come to pay the piper and redeem the wrong of yesterday.

For our flowing waters have many uses. Most of our rivers and lakes are used for recreation; for drinking water; for fishing; for irrigation; for hydro power generation; and yes, quite properly also for the disposal of waste. Not all of these uses can be reconciled easily. And yet they must be. This is our task. We do not question the use of streams for recreation or drinking or irrigation or hydro power or waste disposal. Yet each one of these uses may conflict with all of the other uses.

Seeing the pollution, many people now consider waste disposal to be an illegitimate use of water. But waste is an unavoidable factor of our modern way of life. Matter cannot be created or destroyed. Whatever we build, whatever we use, must somehow be disposed of, and disposal to most of us means getting our ugly discards out of our sight. We inevitably turn to water to transport this residue to the sea.

Waste disposal is not necessarily an illegitimate use for water and it does not necessarily interfere with other uses for water because our waterways, if not overloaded, can purify themselves. It is only when the natural ability of water to cleanse itself is surpassed that we find this use of water interfering with other uses of that precious resource.

All of this makes one point very clear. Our water must be so used as to ensure the maximum stream of benefits to all of the users for all of the purposes for which water is required. This optimization can only occur if we have comprehensive planning to achieve our goal of multi-purpose use. We must look at each basin as an integrated whole. We must examine all the uses which can be made of each basin. We must plan for the future so as to achieve the greatest long-term net social benefit of our water resources. The Canada water bill will allow us to do this—to plan together with the provinces firstly the optimum utilization of our water resources, taking into account all the uses which can be made of our water; and secondly, the re-establishment of water quality to preserve the best balance among these uses.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are facing a costly problem and we shall not avoid it. It will cost Canadian society some billions of dollars over a period of time to deal with its water resources in a rational way, and to undo the