

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—SUGGESTED LACK OF ACTION TO COMBAT POLLUTION

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Aiken.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew North): Mr. Speaker, may I begin my remarks by referring to what the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) said. Among other things he said, I believe, that in the field of pollution the government has displayed absolute neglect. I was therefore pleased to hear the minister, after some opposition speakers had spoken, point out clearly that this government has not been absolutely neglectful. In fact, the minister's statement proved that charge to be wrong. He outlined many programs the department has undertaken. Many constructive programs have been undertaken that many know nothing about. I am, therefore, sure that the minister welcomed the opportunity of putting on record those programs that are being undertaken so that hon. members of this house and the people across Canada may know what is happening. He referred to the trailer complex with respect to the Inland Water Centre at Burlington, Ontario, which the committee visited. The trailer complex consists of 55 units. As research develops and continues at this centre, some of these trailers will be transferred to locations in other areas of Canada in order to carry on research there. This complex can be subdivided into many units. That project, which the committee had a chance to visit, is an extremely constructive one.

One cannot talk about pollution without recognizing, as is spelled out in the fourth report of the standing committee, that there is a jurisdictional conflict in this area. We are concerned about the conflict and those who participated in the drafting of the report know how concerned we were and are about it. Unfortunately the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka was not present at our deliberations when this report was first drafted.

The provinces of Canada, Mr. Speaker, guard their jurisdictions with great jealousy. The province of Ontario has made pollution

Alleged Lack of Action to Combat Pollution control the responsibility of one particular minister. Is this action not an admission that the provinces indeed have a great responsibility in the area of pollution? I do not think, therefore, that the federal government can bulldoze ahead as some have suggested it should in an attempt to do what we all desire with regard to pollution. As I say, this jurisdictional conflict was of great concern to the members of the committee. The committee recognized and regretted the great division of authority in this area and the resulting jurisdictional conflict.

● (8:10 p.m.)

I wish to put on the record an excerpt from the committee's report. I quote:

Your committee is concerned by increasing magnitude of air, water and soil pollution and the jurisdictional conflict which hampers the finding and implementing of proper solutions.

I commend the members who participated in writing this report. In our committee we had a very frank discussion. We are trying to recognize problems and give direction to them. In the drafting of that report there was no real evidence of partisanship or bias from members of various parties on the committee.

The federal government's responsibility lays in research. It lays in joint jurisdiction on interprovincial and international waters. Problems in the Great Lakes must be solved by representatives of eight states of the United States, the International Joint Commission, Washington, Ottawa, Ontario and so on. This is no small problem to overcome. This fact has been mentioned many times in this house. It is a problem of great interest to me because my constituency borders on the Ottawa River. The pollution of the Ottawa River is more severe in the Ottawa area.

I think the emphasis which has been given to this problem in this house has made it appear as though the federal government has total responsibility, when indeed the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and Ottawa share that responsibility. Let there be no question about this.

Mr. Winch: It still stinks, no matter who is responsible!

Mr. Hopkins: If anything constructive results from this debate, it should be that of portraying to the Canadian people the great need for a higher degree of transfer of powers to the federal government. Pollution does not stop at provincial boundaries, nor does it stop