

The editorial refers to the conference on pollution which was held in Montreal under the auspices of the council of resource ministers about a year ago. As I have mentioned previously in the house, I took advantage of the opportunity which was afforded me to attend that conference. As I have stated publicly on a number of occasions, I found it to be a most exciting event because of the wide variety of people attending—scientific experts, government officials at various levels, representatives of interested organizations, and so on. A stimulating exchange of ideas took place and I was hopeful that some definite action would result.

I did recognize, however, as I said on November 17, 1966, when I spoke in the house on pollution and the conference, that one could not expect the influence of the conference to be apparent immediately. Along with others in the house who have a particular interest in this subject, I think I may say I have been somewhat reticent in pressing this matter upon the attention of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Pepin) who is the federal member of the Council of Resource Ministers. We recognize that the situation is a complex one which requires careful study and analysis before the government of Canada can be expected to bring forward concrete proposals for consideration by the house. Nevertheless, I think a year is more than enough time in which to have made a definite statement concerning the direction in which the federal government is prepared to move. We are still awaiting a statement of this kind. We did not get one yesterday when questions were raised in the house in the wake of a television program, though we had the right to expect this kind of information from the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson). I should like to refer now to a question which was asked on February 24, 1967. It was directed to the Prime Minister by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) and is reported in *Hansard* at page 13431 as follows:

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of his statement yesterday in Toronto that legislation concerning water and air pollution will be brought before the house this year, can he indicate when it may be put on the order paper?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, I said I hoped a lot of the things I mentioned would be decided during the year.

Mr. Aiken: May I ask the Prime Minister whether he expects it to be this session or the following session?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I should think it would have to be in the autumn.

Policy Statement on National Resources

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are nearing the end of October. I do not know what people in the Prime Minister's part of Canada consider the autumn season to be, but in my view the autumn season is practically over. Despite this, the Prime Minister gave an answer yesterday which offered no indication that legislation would be placed on the order paper this session, no indication of the kind of legislation the government might wish to bring down. He simply said that this was the kind of thing which would have to be considered. That is simply not good enough.

When I spoke last November I put forward some of my own conclusions arising out of my observations during the conference. I said there seemed to be general recognition that the federal government had jurisdiction in certain aspects of this field and that most people agreed that authority for enforcement measures rested primarily with the provincial governments. Perhaps I can quote from the remarks I made in the house on November 17 of last year as reported in *Hansard* at page 10021:

There was general agreement, which certainly confirmed the view I have held for quite some time, that the only way in which this problem can be really attacked in a proper manner is if we in this parliament, through the federal government, exercise real leadership and guidance. Only when we can develop a national code and national standards based upon active and continuing research, so that the standards can be continually upgraded as new science and technology are developed, can we make continuing progress in this field which will lead to more uniformity across the entire country, thereby avoiding all the complications in the various fields of industry because of the existence of different standards in different regions or provinces of the country.

So far the government has given us no indication whether it agrees or disagrees with an approach of that kind based on conclusions which, as I said, appeared to be the consensus reached at the conference called to deal with the whole field of water, air and soil pollution.

● (3:50 p.m.)

The extent to which provincial authorities have taken action may be open to question. Reference has already been made to legislation within the jurisdiction of the government of Ontario. In 1966 one of the N.D.P. members of the British Columbia legislature introduced a bill to amend the pollution control act of that province in order to broaden the then very limited powers of the British Columbia pollution control board. These extended powers would have covered water, air and soil pollution. Whether or not the