

Water Resources Programs

If clause 18b, proposed by the member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) is adopted, fixed limitations will apply specifically to the manufacture and sale of the phosphates or nutrients which are responsible for pollution.

This clause aims at the eventual removal from the market of all phosphates and nutrients.

Clause 18c aims at controlling the sale of these products.

I support the motion introduced by the member for Vancouver-Kingsway.

Perhaps we should have heard again in committee the representatives of some of the major companies which are producing and marketing all kinds of detergents and soaps but, in my opinion, we would probably have wasted our time as they had nothing new to tell us, after all the committee had heard in this connection.

The committee has held 36 sittings on pollution and has heard arguments of all kinds. It was said by some that detergents were not a water pollutant, and others claimed that detergents or soaps do not pollute water more than anything else.

It behooves us as members of Parliament to safeguard to the greatest extent possible the health of the Canadian people. It is high time for us to take whatever action is necessary so that the interests of Canadians may come before the profits of some companies. It is also high time for the government to act in the interest of Canadians by devising a policy with clear-cut objectives, irregardless of any adverse effect, albeit strong ones, this may have on a few companies.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore support the amendment under consideration.

[*English*]

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): I too, would like to endorse the two sections of the motion before the House asking for an earlier banning of phosphate and making it very clearcut when the use of detergents containing phosphates will cease in Canada.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the three preceding speakers and I can pretty well endorse the statements they made. However, there are one or two other points on which I should like to comment. Before I do, I must say that I think during our committee hearings the entire committee worked very hard and spent a great deal of time going over the various problems and suggestions

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

which were presented. While we have not got everything in the bill which we wanted—in fact, it is very weak in some sections—this particular section dealing with phosphates is certainly a step in the right direction, although frankly we feel that it does not go far enough or fast enough.

I believe it was the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard) who indicated that the committee had not heard both sides of the story. I realize that in the last day or two of committee hearings the soap manufacturers wished to appear but I believe it was a question of time more than anything else which prevented this. The committee members felt that the passage of the bill through committee could not be delayed any longer and they decided to proceed with their consideration. I wish to point out for clarification that the committee has been dealing with the bill for several months.

• (3:50 p.m.)

The soap companies had been warned by the minister in February of this year that certain regulations regarding phosphates would be put into effect. The idea behind this warning was to give the companies an opportunity to present briefs. When the committee met, we advertised for a period of weeks urging anyone interested in the Canada Water Act to contact the secretary of the committee so that arrangements could be made to hear their representations. For almost three months, we did not hear anything from the large soap manufacturers. A day or two before the bill was completed in committee, we were informed that they wished to make representations on another matter. There were representations from the Electric Reduction Company of Canada who dealt very thoroughly with the possibility that other ingredients in the waters of the great lakes were causing algae growth. They indicated this could be caused by nitrogen or carbon dioxide. Their presentation was excellent. The members of the committee were well informed through the excellent material provided by this company.

I have taken a good look at both sides of the situation. I am on the side of those who feel that we must move quickly to ban all phosphates in Canada. I wish to make one or two points. These are basically the reasons the amendment has been moved by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). We have been informed that there is to be a reduction to 20 per cent of phos-