

• (3:20 p.m.)

The Minister of Fisheries also said in that same article:

The Fisheries Act must, of course, be applied uniformly across the country.

I repeat, he said that it must be applied uniformly across the country. We must not have a piecemeal approach to the matter. I continue quoting:

New plants should be up against uniform standards wherever they locate. They must be up against the same laws and the same regulations. Otherwise they will be able to seek out the provinces which have poorer standards and exploit their pollution laws.

That is exactly the point I have been trying to make. If water quality management areas are created in this country, they will become pollution havens.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Hear, hear.

Mr. Harding: We shall find that industry will seek out these havens. That is why the minister, in his wisdom, advocated a year ago that we adopt uniform laws throughout the country which would apply to industry and to different bodies of water. It amazes me that the minister and his advisers cannot see the damage they will do to the fight against pollution by their refusal to accept national standards for different classes of water in this country.

May I now refer to a speech the Minister of Fisheries made on January 15, 1970?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hope the hon. member will not mind being interrupted by the Chair. As he knows, we have before us at present a specific amendment which stands in the hon. member's name. It is my impression that some parts of his speech are rather general and would be more appropriate if raised at third reading rather than in relation to a specific amendment. I realize, also, that we have had rather far reaching debate up until now on these two amendments. I hope hon. members who take part in the debate at this stage will not forget that this is neither the second nor the third reading stage of the bill, but rather the report stage where speeches ought to be limited as much as possible to the amendment before the House. I say this in a general way, while taking into full account the fact that we have had a very general debate until now. I hope at the same time that these reservations will be kept in mind by hon. members.

Water Resources Programs

Mr. Harding: Mr. Speaker, I have confined my remarks to the Motions No. 7 and 14. We are debating them jointly. Both refer to the need for national standards in the various classes of water throughout Canada. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that my remarks will be confined to this aspect of the amendments and to those clauses of the bill that we are currently discussing.

Not only members of the opposition but cabinet ministers, provinces across Canada and members of important organizations feel that there is a need for national standards. Because the issue is so vital, I submit it requires a little more discussion and debate than might normally follow when the House is dealing with other amendments which may not be quite so all embracing as this one. I should like to put on the record something the minister said in January of this year. He said that there is a great need for a national water quality code. The Minister of Fisheries was interested in the setting up of a code which would be national in scope. At page 4 of his speech he said, "We need a national water quality code. Also we need regional guidelines drawn to meet regional needs. We need to know what the performance standards for each industry are." The minister, I believe, has pointed to one of the great weaknesses of this bill. It should be changed to include a provision for national standards. We submit that the effectiveness of the act will be impaired very seriously by the fragmentation of standards. We ought to be applying a uniform system of standards on a Canada-wide basis.

We find that in a number of speeches delivered during the past year, the Minister of Fisheries has indicated that what Canada needs desperately at this stage is broad, national guidelines upon which to base our over-all attack on the pollution problem. In addition to what the minister said, we can rely on the submissions of a number of organizations, including the Canadian Wildlife Federation, which presented a brief to the committee. The Federation, too, is extremely worried about the approach the government is taking to national standards. May I quote briefly from the brief? It reads in part:

In its present form, Bill C-144 provides for establishment of water quality standards only in those areas which have been designated as water quality management areas. As we understand it, standards would vary from area to area. We believe that this piecemeal approach would have a most detrimental effect on the quality of water in Canada, through