

Alleged Lack of Action to Combat Pollution

working very hard toward this end in close collaboration with his colleagues in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Transport, the Department of Fisheries and Forestry, as well as his provincial counterparts.

That, in essence, is the message. Action is under way; more action is forthcoming. The health of our nation demands control of air pollution. Therefore the federal government, along with the provinces, fully intends to meet that demand.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, we in this party welcome at least part of the motion of the official opposition, as far as the word "pollution". The wording of the motion could have stopped there and we would have had more than sufficient subject matter to keep us all busy for the entire day. However, the additional wording in the motion concerning Vote 1 of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources allowed the minister, quite rightly, to deal at length with the activities of his department at present. It seems strange to many Canadians that we can spend so much time, attention and money on so many mundane things and yet through our governments, our organizations and our industries are unable to effectively deal with the problem that has to do with the survival of our own people as well as the survival of mankind as a whole. We worry even about deodorants. We worry about our armpits. We could well be running around with nice smelling bodies while we breathe in dirty, smelly air and bathe in dirty, polluted water.

It seems to us that our society has ground to a halt or a painfully slow crawl in taking effective action to reduce present pollution and head off future pollution. We are in a morass of conflicting jurisdictions, a multiplicity of departments, boards and commissions between and in the three levels of government. Departments and boards are all too often unaware of what each is doing and their responsibilities overlap.

I was quite interested to hear the elucidation of the minister on the activities of his department. We consider many of them great. We agree perfectly with and approve of the efforts being made in research into water pollution carried out by his department as well as by other departments. There is little or no argument from any corner of the house on the kinds of programs which he mentioned

[Mr. Isabelle.]

earlier. But he still evaded presenting the kind of effective action which the government must take to deal with pollution. One could even point out a few minor specific examples of instances with which the federal government could deal immediately.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro), and perhaps even the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis), might ask the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Cadieux) to consider the sewage disposal units of Canadian forces bases. To be more specific I should mention the one at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan which, believe it or not, still has a separate sewage disposal plant that only gives primary, not secondary treatment to sewage, and dumps it into Moose Jaw creek after which it flows downstream to the city. Surely, it would make sense in this case for the Canadian forces base to integrate the sewage disposal system with that of the city near which it is located to provide a better treatment of sewage disposal. I suggest to the ministers whom I have just mentioned that they draw the attention of the Minister of National Defence to the situation at all the Canadian forces bases and at other federal government establishments throughout Canada.

• (9:00 p.m.)

The Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) made a statement in the House of Commons on May 29 as reported on page 9203 of *Hansard* concerning the National Capital Commission and the development of the national capital in which he mentioned that federal assistance was part of a wider development program under which action would be taken to eliminate air and water pollution throughout the whole capital region. May I mention an additional example of a case in which action is required? The minister did not mention this in his statement and I have seen no mention of it before or since. I refer to the operation which goes on in the middle of the national capital. I have heard of no plans of a reasonably long range nature, ten or 15 years, or a shorter period if possible, to do away with the assault on our eyesight and the insult to our noses in the middle of our national capital. I speak of the E. B. Eddy Company. Surely plans are being made for the gradual removal of that plant and the re-establishment of a new modern one somewhere else in this area.