

Water Resources

Incidentally, we once opposed a project to set up provincial agencies in which the state would have usurped the role of private enterprise, because we of the Ralliement Cr ditiste are and will always remain in favor of private enterprise in the field of planning as well as implementation.

However, the interest of the provinces is to use all financial and technical assistance the federal government is willing to grant them. In our opinion, initiatives and planning should come from the provinces. On the other hand, the federal government can and must act as—catalyser of opinions in promoting the direction of national objectives and in adopting measures which will create a collective urge towards action and eliminate regional disparity.

For this purpose we suggest that federal government action at first be concentrated on research, information, technology and public education. There must be co-ordination in research and information. Canadians should be made to realize in a rational way the problem of water and environment.

Secondly, minimum standards should be set up concerning quality of water and sewage in cooperation with the provinces. Progress has already been made by proposing Canadian standards. All that remains is to improve these standards and incorporate them into our legislation.

Thirdly, an inventory of our Canadian water resources should be made in cooperation with the provinces because every province is interested in such an inventory, yet without overlooking the overall viewpoint.

Fourthly, mechanisms for federal financial participation should be set up on the basis of long term financial liabilities. In other words, we suggest that a cost study be undertaken for each province and for Canada as a whole. The distribution of costs among levels of government and the mass of consumers should be established on the basis of those estimates and within the framework of a financial program tailored to the estimates. Every effort should be made in order to devise fairer and more reasonable financing methods. At the present time, municipalities and industries are faced with a financing problem which impairs the implementation of the necessary programs. We think the federal government can give without delay the required financial assistance.

Finally, I feel that setting up a Canadian water commission to plan the overall, long

term management of water in Canada is a must. We are convinced that the federal government must assume its role in the field of water management. Its presence in that field must generate more co-operation than friction, more efficiency than administrative complications, and stimulate rather than impede present means of action.

Finally, and I feel this is one of the most important points, I suggest that the Bank of Canada should grant low-interest loans to municipalities and cities to enable them to deal with those problems themselves. If low interest rates can help foreign countries, namely developing countries, it seems to me there is all the more reason for the Bank of Canada to be allowed to use them in the case of the municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, some Canadian citizens want to help solve the problem of water pollution. They see the problem but, led as men are today by filthy lucre, they will die of poisoning tomorrow, victims of their own cupidity, unless they use the methods we advocate.

● (9:10 p.m.)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. B chard): The hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale). I mean, the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt).

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): The hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) and I have occasionally been mistaken for each other, so I can understand Your Honour's temporary confusion in the matter.

Mr. Pelletier: You can't play the trumpet!

Mr. Nesbitt: I appreciate the remark of the minister in that regard. A great many remarks have been made on this bill this afternoon and this evening, and I have no desire to be repetitious. There is one thing on which we are all quite clear. I am quite sure every member of this House, regardless of which side he or she sits on, is very anxious to make sure that not only the water, but the air, soil and other elements in our country are free of pollution as much as possible in years to come.

I do not think there is any disagreement as to the objectives in this matter. The only question is how best to go about achieving them. As has already been indicated by the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau) and others, it is the feeling of this party that the legislation presented to this