

The Address—Mr. Aiken

and another tomorrow. How can the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry hope to proceed expeditiously in water pollution control with some of these major decisions already made, voted upon and recorded, opposite to the views he now expresses?

The first thing is money. The Canada Water Act and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources both founded because the government would allot no money for pollution control efforts. That minister had to back and fill in an effort to make it appear that the government was doing something. He was sacrificed on the altar of expediency. Is the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry any better off today? There certainly was no indication that he is, either in the Speech from the Throne or in the Prime Minister's remarks.

There is a second difficulty related to the export of water. This issue was placed squarely before Parliament on June 3, 1970. Two members of the opposition, the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) and the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding), each had motions before the House asking that no water be exported from Canada without the approval of Parliament. Surely, that was not an untenable view, but their motions were voted down by the government majority, as recorded at pages 7689 and 7690 of *Hansard*. It is interesting to note that voting against those motions were the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Prime Minister, all of which seemed to indicate the government was taking an attitude that it would not concern itself with Parliament in respect of this matter, and that the issue of the export of water was one on which it could exercise some flexibility. We now find that the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry is taking a definite view on this issue, and I may say that I agree with him in principle.

As recorded in the *Globe and Mail* of October 10, 1970 the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry laid down four basic rules regarding water resources. The first was:

Don't export water to the United States because it will never be possible to cut off the flow.

We agree with this. This was the suggestion we made last May and June when we tried to sell it to the government, but by its vote in this House the government rejected that idea. Where does this leave the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry? There has been a parliamentary decision on the issue, which is going to be very difficult to overcome.

There is another problem here, and again a decision was made by a vote of the House. Time and again during the debate on the Canada Water Act in the committee, in the House and outside it, the opposition pressed for the adoption of a set of water quality standards which would be applicable across Canada. The government just as stubbornly resisted.

In this connection, I wish to quote two comments made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources during the committee proceedings on February 2. The first is to be found at page 1:14, as follows:

A national standard would be a licence, and a free licence, to pollute.

[Mr. Aiken.]

Again at page 1:15 he was recorded as saying, speaking as a Minister of the Crown:

In our opinion uniform standards would not be in the best interest of achieving the highest quality of water all across Canada.

• (3:40 p.m.)

That is what the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said just a few months ago on behalf of the government. On June 3, 1970, as recorded at page 7691 of *Hansard*, there was a recorded vote in the House on a motion moved by the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau) which read in part as follows:

Forthwith upon the coming into force of this Act, the Governor in Council, upon the recommendation of the Minister, shall establish water quality standards for all classes of water in Canada.

That is a clear statement of policy and of intent to establish water quality standards. The government, including the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Prime Minister voted against this motion to set up water quality standards.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That was two-faced.

Mr. Aiken: That position was established and adopted by the government and, even worse, by Parliament by a majority of votes. This is the position. We can reverse it. Nevertheless, we shall certainly wonder if the government today is against establishing water quality standards all across Canada and is in favour of such a course. I want to go farther and quote what the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry said on September 23 in Toronto. I shall read from his own press release:

So there is a great deal to be said for national standards. There is a great deal to be said for standards which apply to Canadian industries from coast to coast. Each new plant will have to meet the same set of criteria. They will not be able to seek out 'pollution havens' in some of our weaker provinces. There will be no local cesspools and the game will be the same regardless of where a firm is operating, in Newfoundland or B.C.

I agree with this position. This is exactly what we spent the whole of the last session trying to promote, in connection with legislation then before the House. It is almost exactly, word for word, our position.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

An hon. Member: But they got rid of Whelan.

Mr. Aiken: We voted on this in the House, and national standards were turned down.

The minister also said this in another speech, in Courtenay, B.C. His speech, I think, was similar to the one he made in Toronto.

Why should we buck national standards which will force other parts of the country to clean up as well? Pollution havens in the East won't help our economic growth in the West. Nor will any lessening of standards, locally, in one part of B.C. help the rest of the province to develop as it should.