

Northern Inland Waters Bill

situation? Indeed, I wonder why there should be any need for two boards to be set up. Why set up two boards when the necessary machinery already exists under the terms of the Canada Water Act?

• (4:50 p.m.)

I will ask the Minister of Mines, Energy and Resources a further question: when the government sets up a designated area and makes a grant to industry there, is any inquiry made beforehand into the nature and extent of the effluent which the industry is likely to discharge? Or does the government go ahead and grant money without taking this factor into consideration? I shall be interested to hear the minister's reply, because I think this is an important point.

Another interesting facet of this situation is that rivers in the Arctic flow from south to north, and the centres of population decrease in size as one travels north. If the water flow is reversed, what measures, will be taken to deal with contamination? I hope all these points will be considered in committee because they are of great practical importance.

Again, I confess I cannot understand the necessity for this bill. Sitting here in the House of Commons year after year we see a multiplicity of bills put forward for consideration. We see them brought in when other legislation already on the statute books could cover the situation, or be made to cover it with the addition of one or two clauses. Surely, the Canada Water Act could have covered any need which may arise in this case. Why set up a new branch of bureaucracy within the government when machinery already exists to accomplish the minister's purpose? I agree that this bill should get a hoist until we are able to go into these questions in greater detail, and think them out. For these reasons, I believe the amendment to be worthy of support.

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, it has been pointed out by a number of my hon. friends that this bill appears to contain several shortcomings. On the face of it, the measure seems to be innocuous. Some of us, bearing in mind the provisions of the Canada Water Act, do not understand the purpose of it at all except for one possibility which has been mentioned by my hon. friend from Peace River.

What bothers people who have been around here for a little while is this: to those who [Mr. Rynard.]

take these innocent-seeming measures at their face value, we say "You don't know Nellie like we do." At any rate, the minister seems to think the bill is important enough for him to attend personally in the House, and this being so some of us begin to think there must be a fish hook in it somewhere. My hon. friend from Calgary North asks which minister I am talking about. I am referring, of course, to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien). This bill, which appears so innocuous, is not, I suspect, so innocent. The National Parks bill, which appeared to me to be quite important, was evidently not regarded by the minister in the same light.

To return to the bill itself. The government proposes to establish two appointed water boards, one in the Yukon and the other in the Northwest Territories, to provide for the conservation, development and utilization of the water resources of the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. Either of these boards, together with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, may recommend to the Governor in Council that certain waters be designated as water management areas and that for these areas priorities of water use and standards of water quality and management may be prescribed. The bill goes on to forbid anybody to dispose of any waste in waters of the Territories except where regulations under the Act permit it, or licence for such water use has been granted by the appropriate water board or where authorization has been given under the Canada Water Act. The minister may appoint inspectors to see that these rules are complied with. All this, as I say, appears to be very innocuous. One cannot see why the House should have been troubled with it, taking into account the legislation which has already been put forward.

In his remarks a little while ago the minister made a brief reference to the reason for this bill in relation to the Canada Water Act. He was kind enough to send me a copy of his speech, so I can quote him with some accuracy. He said: "As hon. members know, the Canada Water bill is intended to protect the national interest and protect water resources throughout Canada. The Canada Water Act assumes that strong regional water authorities exist in the provinces and the territories, and this is the means whereby the federal government can co-operate with provincial and territorial water authorities in a comprehensive planning and management process." That is fine. We do not disagree. The question which