

Government Organization Act, 1970

They have been trying in every way. I do not say that governments have ignored the problem completely. The provincial department of mines has made some studies of the situation. The federal Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have also conducted studies. Since April 22, 1970, officials of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have been preparing a report based on a study they have been conducting as to how this mine-dump fire may best be extinguished. While some efforts have been made, they have not been substantial. They have not been the kind of efforts that would be made if this fire were located in the centre of the city of Ottawa and the people of this city were breathing the fumes from that mine-dump fire, thereby endangering their health. Because this is happening in a small town in Nova Scotia, the people have to suffer on and on. A person with an asthmatic or bronchial condition is put in a very serious situation, one that I suggest should make him leave the community because of possible danger to his life. Hence, I should like to see prompt action taken to put out the fire. Some of the studies which have been carried out indicate that a substantial amount of money is involved in putting out the fire. I think it makes no difference how much is involved; no one in Canada should be asked to live in a community so badly polluted that they might be risking their lives by remaining there.

• (9:10 p.m.)

I have recounted the situation today and hope that when the new department is created—or before it is created, if action can be taken soon enough—steps will be taken to extinguish this fire in the shortest possible time. Having an appreciation of the kind of people living in the community of Springhill, and recognizing the way they have fought back with courage and determination, after two mine calamities, from the brink of complete disaster, I am sure the taxpayers of this nation would gladly see money spent to extinguish the continuing blaze that is such a blight on this great and wonderful town.

It is my hope that the new minister of the environment will take quick action to see that a report that was supposed to have been completed in September of 1970 is released. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) informs me that the report is not yet complete and that it will not be made public when it is complete. Perhaps the information contained in that report is so shocking, not just to the people who live in the community of Springhill but to the people of the whole nation, that it is better so far as the government is concerned that it be kept secret. But I believe it is in the interests of the people of that community to make the report public as soon as possible and that immediate action be taken thereon.

We all became very concerned about the effect on the environment of the *Arrow* disaster in Chedabucto Bay, as well as the effect it had on wildlife. I am just as concerned about human life in the town of Springhill, the residents of which have been facing this terrible pollutant day in and day out, 365 days of the year, for the last decade. The government spent \$4 million to clean up the *Arrow* pollution and it had better spend \$1 million, or

[Mr. Coates.]

whatever is the cost, to extinguish this mine-dump fire as quickly as it can.

I should now like to pass to another subject which will also interest the new minister of the environment, and that is Fundy power. I am indeed pleased to see the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) in the House this evening, for as Nova Scotia's representative in the cabinet he was of material assistance in having a study carried out by the federal government and the governments of the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. This study revealed that Fundy tidal power was a feasible scheme from an engineering point of view, though it expressed some doubt as to the financial feasibility of the scheme.

Since this programming board's report has been brought down, new information has come to light. An international conference was held in Halifax in the spring of 1970 on the utilization of tidal power. It was chaired by Dr. Thomas J. Gray of Nova Scotia Technical College and produced much valuable information on the feasibility of harnessing the Bay of Fundy tides, as well as a new insight into how tidal power could best be harnessed to produce thermal power 24 hours a day at an economic rate. In addition, there was information about the marketing potential of Fundy power. There is no doubt that Fundy power could be sold just as quickly as it is produced. The question appears to be one of dollars and cents. The man who will be the first minister of the environment has said that cost is not as important as pollution-free projects wherever they may be and in whatever sector of the economy they fall. Fundy power would be completely pollution-free; no pollution of any kind is associated with tidal power.

Only recently the United Nations indicated that tidal power was a vital future source of energy in the world because of its pollution-free aspect. Surely Canada should be the first to seize upon the opportunity of producing pollution-free power in gigantic amounts which would be available to the whole of Canada as well as to the United States, especially the eastern seaboard of that country. What is more important, Mr. Speaker, is that the federal government, through the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, has indicated a willingness to re-examine the programming board's report to determine whether this project, in light of new technical evidence particularly as to how power can best be utilized from the tides, is feasible. He has said the government is willing to go ahead with this re-examination if requested to do so by the other two partners who initially assisted in a financial way toward the production of this report.

• (9:20 p.m.)

The Premier of the province of New Brunswick has indicated his support for a re-examination of this project. The Premier of Nova Scotia, for reasons best known to himself, has said he will not request a re-examination of the report produced by the programming board or the new material that is available. I do not understand why the Premier of Nova Scotia takes this position, because that province would be the beneficiary in many ways and it is impossible to imagine what such a project might to