

*Water Resources*

to the House legislation with teeth and able to deal with the problem effectively, we see legislation that is complicated and largely ineffective.

• (9:20 p.m.)

For example it deals only with water and does not touch upon soil or air pollution. Even as it concerns water, it does nothing to improve the interdepartmental maze or sort out the federal jurisdictional problems as among the various departments of government. It does not make provision for the establishment of national standards for water quality, equipment or monitoring. It does, in fact, still leave it for one province or one area of the country to encourage industry, because of lower standards of pollution control in other parts of the country.

There is no indication that the federal government is going to put up any money for pollution control. There is no provision in the act for preventive measures. Areas not designated will apparently wait until their waters are polluted before receiving attention. There is no provision for equal treatment by the federal government of one water quality management area compared with another. In each case everything will be done by separate agreement. One of the other inefficiencies of this proposed legislation is the absence of criteria to justify the amount, or percentage, of federal involvement in each case; and as I mentioned before, there is no fixed cost-sharing formula. The measure provides for the setting up of water quality management agencies, dumping the problems of water management and pollution control on these agencies without giving them sufficient power to carry out their functions.

Some of the questions that should be answered by the minister during the second reading stage of this bill are the following: Will the local agencies have the facilities or knowledge to carry out what will be expected of them? Will they have the power to collect the fees they will be authorized to collect? How will they enforce collection, and are they taxes to be charged against the land? I believe these questions have a very serious bearing on this measure and must be answered before the bill is given approval by the House.

I mentioned at the outset that the minister did an excellent job of introducing the bill. He showed the House that he has a thorough knowledge of the problems of pollution, and expressed a need for immediate attention. I

[Mr. Carter.]

am sorry to say that is where he stopped. It should be said, in all fairness, that the minister cannot be expected to perform miracles or wave a magic wand and have the problems of pollution disappear. After waiting patiently for this legislation, and having listened to ministers talk about its "all-cleansing power," the least we should expect is a measure that might provide some hope for our people.

For my part—I think I share the views of my colleagues on this side of the House—I had visions of a national department or agency being set up to co-ordinate pollution control efforts of all departments and to deal effectively with water quality as part of their over-all approach. I had visions of a bill that would deal with water quality as part of a national priority for pollution control, one which would commit the necessary funds from federal tax revenue. I hoped that the government would establish national minimum standards for water quality management, not just for special areas, and provide for pollution prevention on a national basis.

Getting back to the pollution problem experienced last year in the waters of Placentia Bay as a result of the establishment of the ERCO plant in that area, I see nothing in this bill that would have altered the course of events there had it been in effect at that time. I submit that the Fisheries Act gives the government a greater degree of authority to deal with pollution of our waters than anything embodied in this bill, that is, if the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) is prepared to exercise his authority.

In the case of the pollution of Placentia and St. Mary's Bay, the minister was not prepared to act with the necessary haste because while he was pussyfooting, the waters became more polluted, the economic plight of those affected worsened, the destruction of marine life in the area continued and the cause of pollution became harder to remedy. The Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, not unlike his cabinet colleagues, has been heard to say on a number of occasions about the Placentia Bay episode, as well as on other occasions when the subject of pollution control has been raised, that the shortly-to-appear Canada Water Act would be the answer to the problem. Surely, the minister was not serious, nor did he expect to be taken seriously by the Canadian people when making such utterances. Surely, the minister must have been aware of the meaningless and ineffective attempt being made by the government to deal with the problem, at least as indicated by this bill.