

*Motion for Papers*

Government of Canada or any of its representatives, the Government of the Province of Newfoundland, the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, and the Electric Reduction Company of Canada relating to the establishment of the Electric Reduction Company phosphorus plant at Long Harbour, Newfoundland.

At about the same time, the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding) had a somewhat similar motion placed on the Order Paper wherein he requested copies of correspondence, etc. between this government and the Electric Reduction Company of Canada. His motion did not make any reference to copies of correspondence between the Government of Newfoundland or the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. My motion was subsequently set aside.

● (5:00 p.m.)

In the realization that the information I sought was not that which was supplied to the hon. member, I had my original motion reintroduced. Unfortunately, however, for reasons which I believe are obvious, it was not accepted by the government and hence this debate. A great deal has been said in recent weeks about pollution. Fears have been expressed concerning supertankers, dangerous oil waste and so on, as well as the chaotic effect this would have on marine life around the coast. I agree that a very serious threat does exist. I feel it is incumbent on this government to take every possible precaution against such an eventuality. The people of my riding, St. John's West, have first-hand knowledge of pollution and what it can mean. That is the reason I am anxious to have all available information on the Long Harbour Tragedy. What happened there this past year is our tragedy. A large number of people were deprived of a chance to earn a living. Their livelihood was very seriously affected and for a while completely destroyed by the pollution of the water in and around Placentia Bay by the Electric Reduction Company of Canada.

I feel these people have suffered to a very great extent and are entitled to have the complete facts concerning what happened and what steps should have been taken by this government, perhaps by the Newfoundland provincial government and by the company which caused the pollution. As I said before, I am anxious to have all the information which is available, including copies of all documents

and letters exchanged between the government of Canada, the government of Newfoundland, the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and the Electric Reduction Company of Canada.

In the light of certain correspondence between the federal Department of Fisheries and the manager of the Electric Reduction Company, I am left with no alternative but to state that this government acted in a completely unbelievable and irresponsible manner with regard to the establishment of the Electric Reduction plant at Long Harbour. I have a letter dated January 9, 1967 to the Electric Reduction Company manager from the Regional Director of the Department of Fisheries in which the regional director in effect admitted that his department was incapable of making detailed predictions concerning the probable effect of the waste from the Electric Reduction Company plant on fish life in the receiving waters.

However, after admitting that they were unable to make proper predictions, he did inform the management of the plant that his department would not object to the plant's waste disposal system provided certain requirements were met. I believe it is quite obvious to all of us, particularly the people whose livelihood was destroyed because of this terrible tragedy, that the requirements laid down by the Department of Fisheries were completely inadequate. The results are well known to members of this House, and I suppose to all people of Canada. Certainly, they are well known to the people whose livelihood was affected by the waste from that plant. I suggest that the Department of Fisheries was prepared to gamble with the fishing industry of Placentia Bay and St. Mary's Bay. Indeed, if one realizes the ramifications there could have been, I would go a step further and say that the Department of Fisheries was quite prepared to gamble with the fishing industry perhaps of eastern Canada because what happened in Placentia Bay could very well have ruined the fishing industry of the entire Atlantic coast.

I realize that certain things have been done for the fishermen whose livelihood was affected, but I do not think it will be possible for either the government or the company to reimburse these fishermen completely for what happened this year as a result of this pollution problem. There are people who are still suffering and who will continue to suffer for the rest of this year and perhaps later because of the terrible gamble this government and the Department of Fisheries took in