

Water Resources

own definition of just exactly what constitutes pollution? I suggest that instead of dealing with this as a problem of national urgency we will be dealing with it from ten points of view, if indeed we are fortunate enough to get agreement with all the provinces. That, to my mind, is the basic weakness of this legislation.

The government of Newfoundland is a good example. It knew full well what it was doing when it gave a financial inducement to ERCO to establish a phosphorus plant in Newfoundland. It knew the consequences of a phosphorus plant located at tidewater. It also knew that this province, backward economically with a large and growing problem of unemployment, would have an industry providing jobs. So, Newfoundland turned its eyes away from the immediate threat to the fisheries of the province—the pollution threat to the bay and the displacement of the fishermen involved in that fishery—and went along with the short-term advantage of creating employment for two or three hundred people.

That is an example of how one province might be expected to react. I cannot see for the life of me the province of Newfoundland co-operating in any way, shape or form with this government under this bill if it interfered in any way whatsoever with that province's plans and efforts to induce industry to establish there. The same would apply to any other province in the country. Certainly, it would apply with a great deal of force to some of the regionally disadvantaged provinces such as New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

We have what I consider to be a major weakness in the legislation in that it does not even come close to doing one of the things it is supposed to do. Let me refer to a statement issued by the Minister's office. It is suggested the new bill calls for the pooling of federal-provincial resources across the country to control and combat pollution. That is what the proposed Canada water act is supposed to do.

● (4:50 p.m.)

I am literally astounded at the manner in which this government is treating this problem. There is no reference in the bill to the contiguous waters of Canada. Notwithstanding the immense threat posed to our coastal waters by the opening of the oil reserves of the Arctic and Alaska, the opening of the Northwest passage to supertankers, the possibility of oil being discovered and exploited on the continental shelf on our east and west

coasts and the disastrous consequences of these efforts in respect of the contiguous waters, and indeed the whole ecological balance of life itself, there is no reference whatever to this. Indeed, the bill in my view in its present form is a useless ineffective piece of window-dressing. It is a farce, nothing more and nothing less. It tries to do what the Fisheries Act now could do quite efficiently and effectively if it were properly administered. It is trying to do something in a puny and ineffective way. I am concerned about this. I am concerned about pollution. I am sure many people in this country are concerned about it. Indeed, it is becoming a world problem.

I am concerned about this government's approach to this problem. There is a jurisdictional haze; there is no question about that. There is the Navigable Waters Protection Act which is administered by the Department of Transport. There is the Fisheries Act administered by the Minister of Fisheries. There are various measures which come under the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Indeed, there is quite a bit of ambiguity about who has the ultimate responsibility. Surely, however, the Fisheries Act is quite explicit in setting out what Parliament at that time considered to be the responsibility of the Minister of Fisheries. That responsibility is to ensure that the waters of Canada remain clean. So, why do we have this bill? Why do we have the legislation which is before us?

Mr. Gibson: There are different types of waters in different parts of the country.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, we have already heard the submission of the hon. member and most of us were unimpressed. I suggest he restrain himself until I finish my speech. There are other areas of pollution which are not even covered by this legislation. We are concerned about this. For example, we are concerned about the pollution of the air. In this age of the Apollo when we can reach the moon, we have yet to come up with an effective means to have a clean automobile engine which will not pollute the atmosphere. We are concerned about the pollution of our environment. No one seems to be doing anything about such things as the non-returnable bottles which are littering the countryside. We are concerned about the pollution of the high seas. We are concerned about the pollution of our coastal waters. In this House we have been pressing the government to state its position on the conference which recently