

Water Resources

restrict the use of phosphates. Either of these courses is possible under the Canada Water Act in areas designated as areas of water quality management. Only in those areas can we restrict or regulate the injection of phosphates. The more general approach of a nation-wide restriction on use is not provided for under the act as it now stands; as I say, we approach this from the water basin standpoint. The committee hearing this bill may well want to explore the possible advantages of a national approach in respect to some general regulatory power. It may wish to suggest additions to the bill to cover phosphates and other chemicals which fall in future into the same category on a national basis rather than on the basis of a water basin approach affecting particular chemicals.

It will be most interesting to hear the views of the committee on this question because we must take remedial action in connection with phosphates in the immediate future.

[Translation]

Clearly, the federal government cannot and should not be involved in every small basin in the country. It must concentrate its human and financial resources on those areas where the federal responsibility is paramount. I think, for example, of the great lakes—St. Lawrence system where navigation, fishery, agricultural, international and interprovincial matters are of great concern.

The problems of pollution and maintenance of water levels are major issues that the province of Ontario cannot be expected to cope with alone. The very size of the problems involved, aside from the federal government's clear jurisdiction over many of these problems in boundary, international and interprovincial waters, dictates the logic of a strong federal role in the comprehensive solution of these problems.

Management of the Ottawa River cannot be divorced from that of the St. Lawrence. Pollution control problems on this river are some of the most difficult to solve in the country, as has been demonstrated by the frustrated pleas of the municipalities along its course seeking leadership from the federal government in bringing the expertise of Quebec and Ontario together with its own, to solve the problems in a comprehensive way. Again, federal jurisdiction and its responsibilities concerning many aspects are very clear.

[Mr. Greene.]

• (4:20 p.m.)

[English]

The problems of the Fraser River involve major fisheries interests, an enormous hydro power potential, navigation and harbours, river and estuarial pollution, and flood control. These problems are all interrelated and can be dealt with effectively only within a comprehensive regional framework and with joint federal-provincial action. The federal government is, of course, already deeply involved in the Fraser River problem. An agreement signed a year ago with the province of British Columbia is providing some \$18 million for a joint program—50 per cent of the cost—for dyking along the lower Fraser River and adjacent areas of the lower mainland.

The Saskatchewan-Nelson River system crosses three prairie provinces and is the major water source for this vast region. The federal government has legislative authority respecting navigation, fisheries, and agricultural uses of the water as well as pollution which derives from or affects these uses. A number of possible water diversion schemes involve more than one province or the Northwest Territories. Federal involvement, therefore, is required, not only because of the possible size and financial implications of the development, but also because federal jurisdictions are involved.

Several important rivers in the Atlantic region, such as the Saint John, have problems that are both national and international in character and for which federal responsibility for fisheries and navigation are important.

Mr. Speaker, we are active in other areas and on other river basins as well. I have mentioned only some of the most important and biggest projects here. It is our intention, under the Act, to concentrate the resources of the federal government on the large multi-dimensional problems usually found in international, interprovincial and some major intraprovincial river basins. We believe this focus will yield a greater return on the funds that will be available than would any attempt to assist in solving the multitude of minor issues that are of a more local nature and properly the responsibility of the provincial water authorities.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, from what I have said here today and from what you all already know, it is clear that the problems we are discussing