

*Water Resources Programs*

interim between the enactment of this legislation and the time provided for cutting down on the use of phosphates may bring new light to bear on the subject. I must come back to the question, why did we refuse to hear the representatives of the phosphate manufacturers? Why did we, as members of Parliament, not hear what they had to say and what their arguments were on the research end of it?

• (3:40 p.m.)

One of the things I have noted over the years, Mr. Speaker, is that much of the legislation passed in this House—when I say “much” really I mean about 15 or 20 per cent—has not mattered a great deal. As a matter of fact, it might have been better if some of it had not been passed because of the problems it has raised today. I think we must take a very good look and be sure of the things we are doing in this House. As an example, we are now having a problem with mothers allowances which were enacted away back in the forties. We now feel we may have been wrong, and there are some who believe a means test should apply. We realize that there are also other aspects of social legislation that the provinces want to take over, as well as family allowances but now there is a difference of opinion between the senior Parliament and at least some of the provincial Parliaments across Canada.

In my opinion we were derelict in our duty in not hearing what the phosphate story was, what the research files of these manufacturers disclose and what they have to show us. I know the Parliamentary Secretary will maintain that it was all agreed that no further witnesses be heard, but surely the ball game was changed with the introduction of the additional clause to control phosphates. The elimination of phosphates from detergents also involves an economic problem. I noted that the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway touched on it but said that we do not want to be overcome by this. It is a big problem involving hospitals, restaurants, hotels, motels and cleaning people all across the board and becomes very important dollar wise if we are not going to accomplish what we set out to do in this bill by the abolition of phosphates.

You may wonder why I am bringing all of this up now. I am bringing it in simply because of the controversy now going on in which three of the top scientists in pollution in the United States say they are not sure about the action of phosphates. It may be that

carbon is the catalyst, and we might not be doing the right thing in wiping out phosphates. They have reported that the presence of carbon may trigger the growth of algae which would not occur with phosphates alone. It is interesting to note that Dr. Kerr, a top biologist for the federal department of water control in the United States has stated:

The data to date from both laboratory and field studies indicates the direct removal of phosphorus is not the controlling factor in the growth of plants.

We, therefore go back to the question of why we are doing this so quickly and, in fact, in the face of disagreement among some of the outstanding scientists on the North American continent. Maybe we are making another mistake. I hope that in time we will have reports from those scientists doing research, and further reports, indicating that maybe we are right. However, if they indicate we are wrong, then we will have a problem and will have to adjust to that. Parliament will again—have passed a bill not fully researched.

I have misgivings about this bill, Mr. Speaker. As I said before, if I were very sure that phosphates were causing all this trouble I would certainly support it without any hesitation. Indeed, I will support it anyway, but I have some grave misgivings that we did not fulfil our duty to listen to both sides of the question or do the studies that should have been done to prove or disapprove if the culprit really is Mr. Phosphate. If it is, this is only a weak step, as phosphate pollution comes from many other sources that may require expensive devices.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in rising in the House to support the motion to add two paragraphs to clause 18 of Bill C-144, entitled:

An Act to provide for the management of the water resources of Canada including research and the planning and implementation of programs relating to the conservation, development and utilization of water resources.

In my opinion clause 18 of the bill is not sufficiently explicit and is confusing. May I quote a passage from the text of the proposed amendment:

any cleaning agent or water conditioner that contains any phosphates or other prescribed nutrients.

Mr. Speaker, what are the guarantees given by clause 18 as it stands now?