

necessitated the careful scrutiny we have all given this bill since last November. And to what have we agreed?

First of all, there was quick and I believe unanimous consent on the need for broad water resources legislation and for a vigorous attack on water pollution. There is general agreement, too, that we had to recognize the role and responsibility of the provincial governments and share our endeavours with them. There has been broad acceptance of the advantages of a management approach and the importance of public involvement in the planning process. We have agreed on the need for greater clarity in the process of joint action with the provinces and several amendments were introduced in committee for that specific purpose. We have also agreed that existing provincial agencies should be used whenever appropriate. We have clarified that we intend pollution control measures to apply to government agencies as well as to the private sector and, while adhering to the concept that the polluter must pay, we have also assured ourselves by a series of amendments that we do have the capability of providing loans for waste treatment plants. And lastly, we have concurred in the need for close control of nutrients entering our waters from cleaning agents, particularly detergent compounds and water conditioners.

These and other lesser amendments taken together are an encouraging advance. They are testimony to your careful analysis of the need for this legislation, for its administrative processes and for the policies it represents and the programs that will ensue.

Even though we have taken a major step in agreeing to these measures, I would be misleading this House and the public if I were to gloss over areas of disagreement. We have said, on this side of the House, that the river basin approach is essential to good management, and not all of you have agreed. But we believe the experience of the British with such rivers as the Thames, the long experience in Germany on the Ruhr River and in France on the Seine, all recommend this approach. Moreover, the experience of the Australians on the River Murray and the success of the Americans with the Tennessee, the Delaware, and the Ohio Rivers seems to us to constitute overwhelming evidence that the river basin is indeed the proper unit for planning and development.

I must confess I find it difficult to understand the resistance to this approach, mild though it is, because it is widely acclaimed by

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almost every water expert, including those of the 18 countries of the water management research group of the OECD.

Having accepted this approach as a doctrine of sound water management, we have also said in this bill that we should have optimum development in each river basin because the aggregate of such optimum developments will, surely, maximize the benefits from our water resources. It follows from this approach that we must have optimal water quality standards for each river basin.

There has been a great deal of debate on this important point. At first we understood some to be demanding a uniform national standard, which was clearly inappropriate; but in recent motions by the opposition there has been a demand for uniform standards for each class of water. Although we are not still fully agreed on this point, certainly we are no longer diametrically opposed. To repeat our position, we firmly believe that the optimal level of water quality based upon the mix of uses and the physical nature of each stream is, by definition, the one level of quality that would provide the greatest net returns. In our view, optimal water quality levels and maximum net benefits from a river system are two sides of the same coin. We propose, therefore, to provide a set of guidelines in regulations to be used in every major river basin when determining such optimal standards. We would expect that identical rivers with the same mix of uses would have equal standards. If some wish to construe this to mean equal standards for equal classes, then perhaps our disagreement is more a semantic than a substantive one.

We have said that the bill is for water resources and not for the entire environment and we have resisted its expansion beyond water. But we by no means want to leave the impressions that the protection of the environment is not crucial and critical for us all. Indeed, we feel our responsibility as trustees of the environment very deeply indeed. What we are saying is that the federal jurisdiction over water is not the same as it is for air and soil. One cannot glibly gloss over the realities of the BNA Act and simply extend the heads of the constitution relating to water to the other environmental elements. We have proposed, after exhaustive analysis, an approach for water that is compatible with the constitution, with today's federalism and with modern management methods. We admit that some similar approach must now be taken for air and soil, and that a co-ordinating umbrel-