

*Water Resources*

Bill C-144 I wish first to deal briefly with the situation in my province of Saskatchewan. Numerous comments have been made about the Saskatchewan River, which also flows into Manitoba, and all of the reports and observations we have read are far from what we consider adequate explanations of what could be done to stop its pollution.

We have been informed that the North Saskatchewan River is polluted by the pulp mill that exists at Prince Albert. Spent acid and caustics are being dumped into the river. The water below the mill is black, and the foam markings on the river banks are an indication of the lack of pollution control. I have been told that enough caustics have been dumped into the river by that pulp mill to make any form of fish life impossible for many miles downstream.

Some provinces have regulations requiring that effluent discharges be treated by aeration, but there are no such regulations with respect to this location at Prince Albert. Instead, all that is done is to provide settling ponds, and all hon. members know, particularly the minister in charge of this bill, that no effective type of pollution control can be achieved with only the use of settling ponds.

I am positive that if federal legislation were introduced that had teeth, the people of the nation would support it wholeheartedly because they are awake to the dangers of water pollution. No doubt certain power groups would lobby against the enforcement of such legislation, the adoption of which might cut into their profits, but the people generally, including those who work in factories, pulp mills and mining enterprises would appreciate the government taking positive action.

At present we have a hodgepodge of provincial regulations and authorities. A waiting game is being played. The status quo is being maintained. I believe the time has come for the federal government to implement positive legislation that will enforce pollution control.

A release by *Canadian Press*, which appeared a short time ago with reference to the Prince Albert pulp mill, stated in part:

The Prince Albert Pulp Mill is not contributing to mercury poisoning in fish in the North Saskatchewan River, Paul Naftel of Regina, said during the weekend.

Mr. Naftel, of the Natural Resources Department's Fisheries Branch, said although mercury was found in fish at the ferry below the pulp mill, it also was found in fish up river from the plant.

The *Toronto Globe and Mail* of January 19, today's date, contains an article headed, "Lack [Mr. Skoberg.]

of Information and Equipment Hampers Study of Mercury Pollution." It reads in part:

Investigators of mercury pollution in the Saskatchewan River, uncertain about the source of the problem, are hampered by a lack of information and research equipment.

Further on, it reads:

It isn't that the problem didn't exist until six weeks ago. Nobody had ever checked Saskatchewan River water for mercury pollution before.

This indicates to me that the federal government does not provide the necessary resources to the provinces to enable them to do the proper research into water quality. Unless sufficient funds are provided to the provinces to enable them to investigate the quality of their waters, nothing will be done to combat pollution until it is too late, and until fish have died by the millions.

I quote another press article as follows:

Grant C. Mitchell, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Water Resources Commission, said Friday his department will deal next week with a plant at Saskatoon accused of polluting the North and South with mercury.

This investigation results from complaints from Manitoba. We should not have to wait for complaints from another province before launching such an investigation.

It has been said many times that there is no excuse for giving a licence to any company or individual to pollute our waters. This must be repeated time after time if we are really concerned about the over-all situation. I am sure that some members have referred to the *Canadian Churchman*, January issue, where certain comments appeared that I think should be put on the record. One article is written by Maurice Western, entitled "Ottawa Comment", and it reads:

● (4:30 p.m.)

In the session of 1960, pollution rated a few scattered questions, speeches by a pair of backbenchers and a private member's bill in the name of Bert Herridge. The bill received first reading and then consigned, as usual but unfortunately, to parliamentary oblivion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this pollution question has not just come upon us today. Here is a report, which indicates that as far back as 1960 the member had a private bill on the order paper but he accomplished nothing that would help mankind or animal life to survive. The article continues:

The complaining backbenchers are now gone from the Commons. What they said about dead birds, oil spills and ruined fishing grounds has since been abundantly substantiated. But nothing much happened to disturb Marx and Technology or to check the pace of pollution.