

*Fisheries Act*

this bill until I have had some enlightenment on what I consider to be the crux of the matter. Some people believe we have too many bills already but I think we need another bill, which would take precedence over any of these now before us, having to do with the question of water quality, a bill which would enable us to know exactly what we are being asked to pass in this bill. I have a picture in my mind of an act to provide for the establishment of a pollution standards code which would authorize the Governor in Council to enact regulations proscribing classes of substances, and processes, and changes of water. This would be the control bill, as it were, which would give meaning to all these other bills, in particular the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act.

In this way, we could intelligently discuss and assess the change to section 33 of the Fisheries Act, which the minister has brought before us. We could then also agree with the other clauses of the bill which give him the authority to regulate in advance the submission of plans, and to require alteration of plans etc. In any event, the design of new industrial plants should be analyzed by technically qualified officials of the fisheries research board, not by some other department, as this would reduce the authority of the minister to protect, develop and conserve the fisheries of Canada. We must take care that the proposed amendments are not allowed to downgrade the powers of the Fisheries Act.

The idea of a pollution standards code is not new, Mr. Speaker. In November, 1966, I made a speech in this House reporting on the conference on pollution and our environment held in Montreal earlier that year. At that time, I summarized and quoted from some of the guidelines produced by the conference touching upon three fields, air pollution, water pollution and soil pollution. The guideline suggested for air pollution was that a single federal agency or organization be established to set up a national pollution abatement code and the details of how this might operate were given.

Under the heading of water pollution, the guideline was that a single federal organization or agency should be established to develop a national pollution abatement code. The guideline on soil pollution recommended that a single inter-disciplinary national agency on environmental contamination be established with broad responsibility in the general areas of, among other things, developing national standards.

I felt that these guidelines were most encouraging, Mr. Speaker, and I summarized the situation in my speech reported at page 10021 of *Hansard* for November 17, 1966, as follows:

—there was general agreement which certainly confirmed the view I have held for quite some time, that the only way in which this whole problem can be really attacked in a proper manner is if we in this Parliament, through the federal government, exercise real leadership and guidance. Only when we can develop a national code and national standards based upon active and continuing research, so that the standards can be continually upgraded as new science and technology are developed, can we make continuing progress in this field.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Apparently the government has rejected that approach, Mr. Speaker, and now this House is being asked to diminish the authority which currently exists in the Fisheries Act of Canada. I sometimes look at sections 91 and 92 of the British North America Act which have to do with the distribution of legislative powers between Parliament and the legislative assemblies of the provinces, and it seems to me, without attempting to pose in any way as a constitutional authority, that when we start talking today about pollution and the control of pollution of our air, water and soil, we are really dealing with an area covered by the preamble to section 91, which reads:

It shall be lawful for the Queen, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate and House of Commons to make Laws for the Peace, Order, and good Government of Canada, in relation to all Matters not coming within the Classes of Subjects by this Act assigned exclusively to the Legislatures of the Provinces;—

I think we recognize, and many thoughtful and knowledgeable scientists have been suggesting this to us, that we are engaged in a process of total war against pollution. The question of our managing our environment in such a way as to protect its quality for living creatures on land, in the sea, and I suppose in this day and age one can include creatures in the air, has reached the proportions of total war. It has reached the stage of being important in considerations relating to peace, order and good government, and is as important as the question of whether or not we can prevent a thermo-nuclear holocaust from breaking out. Although some of the statements attributed today to scientists may make us feel that they are being alarmists, nevertheless we in this parliament would be foolish to ignore the kinds of warnings we are being given from time to time. It is in this context,