

*Water Resources Programs*

can affect the future course of our lives, and this we know is true. However, when the bill dealing with this very important matter comes before Parliament and is debated, we find that the minister responsible for it, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene), is not sufficiently interested to be in the House to listen to what is said by the members.

• (4:10 p.m.)

Yesterday the debate on this bill began. The debate continued for an hour and a half, but the minister was not in the House during that time. Then, this afternoon we again started the debate on this bill, and we have been debating it for another hour. The minister was not here when the debate began, but he drifted in for exactly five and a half minutes—I timed him—and then drifted out again. While he was here he did not listen to one word spoken by any hon. member because he was chatting with somebody else about another matter. This is a government which claims to have a great interest in the welfare of the people of Canada, and particularly the effect of pollution on the lives of the Canadian people. When this bill comes up for discussion in the House we find there is only one member of the cabinet present, and the minister responsible for this measure insults the House, his department and this legislation by not even deigning to sit in this House and listen to the debate that is in progress. This is an insult to Parliament and is an example of how important this government considers this matter to be.

If we expect our fight against pollution in Canada to have any chance of success, I believe we must do three things. First, I suggest we must eliminate the principal cause of the lack of action to date in our fight against pollution which arises from the confusion between the five federal government departments which have some responsibility in this matter. I refer to the Departments of Transport, Energy, Mines and Resources, Fisheries and Forestry, Indian Affairs and Northern Development and National Health and Welfare. Then, there is the confusion that exists between the federal government and the ten provincial governments.

The second thing we must do is work with the United States government, and the governments of the states which border on the waters we share with the United States, in an effort to maintain some similarity in the anti-pollution legislation passed on both sides of

the border. It is obvious that pollution does not stop in mid-stream, so there is no point in Canadians passing good legislation if the governments in the United States do not pass equally effective legislation to deal with pollution on their side of the border.

To those of us who were fortunate enough to be members of the Canadian delegation which travelled to Washington a few weeks ago to meet with our counterparts in the United States government to discuss matters of mutual concern and interest, it was interesting to note that the subject of pollution was given the highest priority; it was first on the list. This is considered by parliamentarians in both countries to be the no. 1 problem facing us today. We immediately got down to business and started to discuss pollution problems without any further ado. It was agreed unanimously by all members of the two delegations that it was absolutely essential that the provincial governments, state governments, the federal government of Canada and the government of the United States work very closely together in an effort to make sure that legislation passed on both sides of the border is as similar as possible so that the fight against pollution of the waters we share can be successful.

The third thing I believe we must do in order to give our fight against pollution a chance for success is to make certain financial arrangements to enable industries and municipalities that discharge waste into our waters to purchase the expensive machinery needed to remove pollutants from their waste before it is discharged. To accomplish the first thing I have mentioned, that is to co-ordinate the efforts within the federal government, the provincial governments and the governments in the United States, I believe we must establish a federal agency to co-ordinate our anti-pollution efforts, both federal and provincial. I would suggest that such an agency, for want of a better name, might be called Environment Canada. This agency should be controlled by a minister so that the confusion which exists between the five departments of the federal government which have some responsibility for anti-pollution measures and the ten provincial governments with which the federal government must work, can be eliminated to the greatest possible and practical extent.

The minister in charge of an agency such as Environment Canada would work to see that the provincial governments, the governments of the states which share this common