



Bulletin

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WATER ACT FOR CANADA

The proposed new Canada Water Act, announced by the Government, is designed to break through "the bureaucratic and jurisdictional maze" that has up to now frustrated efforts at water-pollution control and conservation of water, according to Mr. Otto Lang, the Minister responsible for energy and water resources. "The Canadian public has become increasingly impatient with the failure to develop long-term plans and with the failure of the several levels of government to act in concert," Mr. Lang declared. "The Federal Government," he said, "has the responsibility to take the lead in co-operative action to deal with the growing problem of water pollution and to plan effectively for the management of Canada's water resources in the future. It is almost inconceivable that co-operation would not be secured in dealing with a problem of such public concern. However, in such an unlikely eventuality, the proposed act would give the Federal Government authority to act alone in dealing with the pollution of inter-jurisdictional waters."

Mr. Lang said that, although many projects for conserving Canada's water supply had been successful, there had been undue emphasis on "structural", piecemeal solutions. One of the innovations that would correct this situation would be the Water-Quality Management Agencies, which would be responsible to both the federal and provincial governments and would draw on the advice and knowledge of the people, municipalities and industries directly concerned in cases of pollution. Ratepayers, he added, would be more willing to authorize expenditures on municipal waste-treatment plants if they knew that other municipalities and private industry

were doing their part. Planning would embrace entire regions and river-basins.

Mr. Lang concluded by saying that he intended to meet almost immediately with his provincial colleagues to begin discussions on the implications of the proposed act.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WATER ACT

The following are the chief measures proposed in the new Act:

- (1) Together with the provinces, the Federal Government would designate as a water-quality management area any body of water where there is significant national interest.
- (2) Pollution of waters in such designated areas would be punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 for each offence. Each day this pollution continued it would be regarded as a separate offence.
- (3) Together with the provinces, or alone, if necessary, on interjurisdictional waters, the Federal Government would launch water-quality management programs in designated problem areas, which would be administered by agencies that would recommend objectives of water quality and steps to achieve these objectives. Agencies would be charged with implementing approved water-quality management plans.
- (4) Water-quality management agencies would design and operate sewage-treatment facilities, col-