

Government Organization Act, 1970

this at one time in a question I put to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), and I hope that the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis), and indeed the Prime Minister, will give this matter very serious consideration.

I think that the whole government approach to pollution control and environmental quality should be put together. I sympathize with the hon. member to some degree when he points out that perhaps certain other matters should also be dealt with by the new department of environment. On the other hands, the department might then become too large. I am not in favour of creating what might be called a pollution czar, and I think perhaps if this were done by the government under the bill before us, the first criticism that might be levelled by opposition members would be that the minister is an empire builder.

The hon. member made another good point with regard to population. I feel that this is going to be a serious problem which we will have to face in the next few years. Over-population is certainly a serious problem. I do not know whether it will come under the jurisdiction of the new department of environment, but I hope that the minister can also give this serious subject some consideration.

I was going to deal with the matter of standards but perhaps I will leave it for now. I was a member of the committee dealing with the Canada Water Act. Much of the debate here centred about a lack of definition. I agree with the minister when he says that we should not create pollution havens. We also said this in the debate on the Canada Water Act. At the same time, we have to recognize ecological differences between the different waterways and in different parts of the country. I hope that, as a result of the remarks the minister made today, this whole question will receive a much clearer treatment in the next few months.

I agree with one thing which the Leader of the New Democratic Party said yesterday and which I will paraphrase. He said that the present Minister of Fisheries and Forestry was a good minister. He said that he had confidence the minister would do the job that is required because of the record he has achieved in the last couple of years. May I add that the people of Kamloops are very proud of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry who was born and raised there. Even though he has not lived there since his late teens, he is still considered a native of that area.

In closing I want to wish the minister luck in his new department. I know that most of the Canadian people will be with him in his efforts.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to participate in this debate which I consider to be very important, since this bill deals with a great number of matters, all of which are more or less important. I believe that pollution is perhaps the main

[Mr. Marchand (Kamloops-Cariboo).]

subject matter of Bill C-207 and this is why I would like to elaborate on it.

However, I feel that other sections of this bill should have been dealt with separately because we more or less object to them. In passing, may I say that this method of introducing omnibus bills leaves us in a rather difficult situation. Hon. members will understand that we agree with certain aspects of a bill such as this while we disagree with others.

On second reading, especially, we have to commit ourselves with regard to the principle of the bill. That puts us in a rather difficult situation. That is why I feel that, although the practice dates back quite some time, as soon as we find that it does not meet the proposed objectives or the needs of the debate, it should simply be set aside. We should not feel bound by tradition.

Mr. Speaker, I should now like to deal more specifically with the problem of pollution. It is difficult, over a short period of time, to delve into all the aspects of an omnibus bill such as this one, and if the occasion arises, I shall at a later date deal with the other aspects of the bill.

Pollution is not a new problem. It has been around for a long time, but apparently we have only been concerned about it for a few years. It is evident that rivers have long been polluted, but the flow of some of them enabled us to protect the supply of drinking water. However, as population increased in some of our cities, pollution has worsened and we have continued to use those rivers as open sewers. Today, we must bear the consequences.

Industries set up on shore-lines have also contributed to their pollution. Now, we know that a single plant producing 1,000 tons of pulp daily consumes as much oxygen as a city of 250,000 inhabitants.

It is readily realized that the owners of the numerous factories which must satisfy the needs of consumers, whether they are pulp mills, oil refineries, or even alcohol distilleries, are more interested in picking up profits than in the protection of the consumer. The great number of factories has largely contributed to the pollution of streams, rivers, the Great Lakes and even the ocean.

I feel that our governments, as well as those of other countries, must undertake a battle against pollution. I trust that the neighbouring countries have provided for this, now, and that they will keep on taking the required measures so as to contribute to the control of water and air pollution.

For a long time in the history of Canada disputes have arisen between border cities about air pollution, for example. You will recall the discussions in Trail, B.C., some years ago which degenerated into legal action. Such events have gradually made the population and the governments aware of the necessity to undertake this fight against pollution.

It gives us some satisfaction to see that the industries themselves have come to the point where they admit