

Criminal Code

Again I emphasize that water is our most important natural resource. Let us guard it well. Let us continue to purify it by filtration and the use of chemicals but let us also strike at this one source of pollution by the effective action proposed in the resolution. It is a matter of urgency, a matter of national need. Today water pollution is the most widespread and threatening problem facing our nation. To restore the purity of our Canadian waters and guard them against degradation, legislation must be based on good will and understanding between the federal, provincial and municipal levels. It may be necessary for the federal government to participate in grants to take care of a certain percentage of the cost, or even a definite lump sum, whichever might be the greater, whenever the federal government deems it necessary to enforce action on the offending municipality. It will be my hope, and I am sure the hope of all Canadians that co-operation and co-ordination at all levels of government will assure us the finest water supply in the world.

Mr. M. W. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to congratulate the other members who have spoken on this matter today. In particular, I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) upon his excellent speech. It was easy to see that he had spent considerable time studying the problem and gathering knowledge on this matter.

As has been pointed out, there was a time when the illness, plagues and so forth resulting from pollution were caused by ignorance of the effects of pollution. It is true that pollution has been with us for about as long as the history of mankind, but it is true also that, at least on this hemisphere, ignorance of the results of water pollution is no longer a reason for its existence. I would say, that the reasons we have this considerable extent of pollution in this country today are, first of all, carelessness and, secondly, greed and the great lack of consideration for our fellow men. It seems to me that we in this country have been behaving something like the irresponsible youth who squandered the inheritance passed on to him by his forefathers. Certainly, this is true of our natural resources, of our rivers, lakes, and so forth. I would agree with the hon. member for Carleton when he says that we have just about reached the end of the line. We have reached a stage now where we can no longer ignore the problem. We are like the irresponsible youth who sees his last \$1,000, and says it is time to do something about this now. We are in that situation.

It is very interesting to remind ourselves that where there is no civilization there is

no such thing as pollution in this country of ours. The farther we get from civilization, the more pure become the rivers and lakes and the less danger there is of illness and other things which result from water pollution. It is fine to realize that and accept, it, but the question with which we have to deal today is, what are we going to do about it?

It has been suggested, certainly in many places across the country, that they would like to do something about this problem but it is too expensive. I would say it all depends upon what set of standards we are using. If it is expensive today to try to deal with this situation, it is only because of the accumulation of many years. It is only because a minor expenditure was neglected years ago that today we are faced with great expenditures to correct the situation. I would say that it is too expensive not to do something about it. Not only do we owe it to ourselves to do something about it, but we must remember our responsibility to the future generations of this country. Furthermore, because it may be expensive at the present time, because it may be difficult—certainly there are difficulties to be overcome—that is no reason for any further procrastination. This situation must be met. The longer we delay meeting the problem the more expensive it is going to be to solve it.

Hon. members from all parties in this house have expressed their agreement on this matter. I would say that they should be as enthusiastic on another matter which presents a danger to us today and which, according to our scientists, is going to be the cause of another form of pollution not only of our waters but the air we breathe. I am referring, of course, to the testing of atomic weapons. This is something that we are going to have to face, and it is going to be a bad thing, not only for our natural resources but for the very air we breathe.

One of the handicaps, if one could call it that, of such an exhaustive and thorough study of the situation as was given by the hon. member for Carleton is that he does not leave too much for anyone else to say. Many of the points with which I had intended to deal were very well covered by him, possibly far better than I could have covered them. The only comment I can make is that I heartily endorse the remarks he made on the various aspects of this problem.

Another thing I was interested in noting today was the fact that former speeches of the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) were quoted. Usually, this is a privilege reserved for the members of the opposition, but today it was done by members on the government side. The remarks of the Prime Minister that