

*Water Resources*

Each agency will be provided with the capability for analyzing and planning its own water quality program for subsequent governmental approval, and thereafter for constructing and operating waste treatment facilities. In most instances existing provincial and municipal pollution control authorities and facilities can be utilized. Then, too, agencies will be required to enforce the regulations including the inspection of plants and the analysis of water quality. Some of these functions can be centralized. Others will be more efficient if decentralized. The precise arrangement can be worked out through negotiations with the provinces under the flexible terms of the Act. To repeat, the objective is to achieve optimal water quality levels for each water body efficiently and effectively. This new statute is the enabling framework, the vehicle for joint co-operation.

Once a water quality plan is implemented, the producer of goods and services who must dispose of wastes will have four options:

(A) to treat his wastes to such a high degree of purity that he would be permitted to discharge them freely into the receiving waters.

(B) to partially treat his wastes and pay a fee for depositing these wastes into the water body.

(C) to deliver his wastes to communal treatment facilities and pay the appropriate charges.

(D) to change the waste producing process so that the waste is eliminated or changed to a harmless form.

With these alternatives, the waste disposer can opt for that scheme or combination of schemes which best suits his own situation. No central authority dictates the selection. Indeed, it is inconceivable that the federal government could make such decisions efficiently for the thousands of waste disposers across Canada.

I think a word of explanation is required here, Mr. Speaker, in respect of these fees. One of the hon. gentlemen opposite has already expressed some fears in this regard. At first glance they may appear to those not familiar with pollution control as a licence to pollute. On the contrary, they are the device which forces the waste disposer to pay the full cost of maintaining water quality, because the fees paid are used by the agency to construct plants or to take other action to provide a better quality of water.

By carefully constructed schedules of fees, depending upon the quantity and kind of waste, and the self-purifying character of the receiving water body, the waste disposer can be forced to pay a fee sufficiently high to permit the water quality management agency either to treat the waste itself or cleanse the entire water body if necessary. We shall not dictate the method to the firm or the municipality but we shall insist, as I said earlier, on the first principle of the bill, which is that the polluter pay the full cost of cleaning up the waste. Indeed, the schedule of fees can be set prohibitively high for certain wastes to ensure that such wastes are totally excluded from water bodies, if necessary.

Because these schedules of fees can be periodically revised upward, a higher degree of treatment of wastes can be induced as needed to achieve the water quality objective even when additional industries and municipalities continue to crowd around a water-body. In this way, the entire process is self-adaptive, an essential feature for a country like Canada that has vast undeveloped areas and yet a rapidly expanding population and a dynamic industry.

Furthermore, this system of fees and charges will permit each agency to become self-supporting after an initial transitional period. In addition, this scheme forces the waste disposer, whether an individual, a firm or a municipality to pay the initial cost of pollution abatement directly. The waste disposer may transfer these costs to the consumer of the goods and services he produces either through consumer prices or local taxes. In this sense, as I said earlier, pollution will become, as it should always have been, a cost of production. The forces of the open market, so essential in a free enterprise system, will be brought to bear to bring efficiency into pollution abatement.

The statute permits regulations to be promulgated from time to time to prevent certain substances from being deposited in designated areas. I would call Your Honour's attention to a specific problem which has been highlighted in recent weeks as a result of the report on the Great Lakes by the Advisory Board to the International Joint Commission. Phosphates from detergents and fertilizers, as well as human and animal wastes, have been identified as the culprit in the aging of lakes and particularly in fostering the growth of algae. Two courses seem open to us: either to call for more extensive treatment of wastes containing phosphates or to