

Water Resources Programs

that the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings did not speak on the amendment we are now considering. He spoke on a previous amendment which was passed.

Mr. Peters: The minister does not know that. He has just come back.

Mr. Greene: After reading his speech, I did not even know he was speaking on the bill. But this is the first opportunity I have had to reply.

Mr. Peters: Why not answer some of the hon. members that spoke on the amendments?

Mr. Greene: I will get to them.

Mr. McCleave: Some time soon, we hope.

Mr. Greene: As I said, there was a reference to the need for co-ordination. Of course we need co-ordinated programs, and that is why in 1966—and this has been explained time and time again in this House and in the committee, as every hon. member knows if he has paid any attention to the debate and if he was interested in anything but the sound of his own voice—

Mr. McCleave: Apparently you were not interested.

Mr. Greene: As I said, in 1966 a co-ordinating structure was conceived. In fact, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources was formed then and was given mandate. If I may quote again for the umpteenth time, it was formed for the purpose of:

Co-ordinating, promoting and recommending national policies and programs with respect to energy, mines, minerals, water and other resources.

Two years ago, the inter-departmental committee on water, involving some 13 departments, as I have stated again and again, was formed. Every water matter of any significance was brought before that committee for careful review and comment before being recommended to the government. The cabinet committees carry the co-ordinating one step further in providing the general policy in the particular area concerned. Finally, the cabinet itself provides the over-all policy decisions which the water resource programs must be designed to promote.

So that this single standard that is so admirable in the eyes of some is not within the purport of the bill because we do not deem it practicable in Canada. But certainly on the question of uniform standards for bodies of water having the same quantum and the

same number of uses, water of the same calibre and quantity, there is ample assurance of co-ordination and an assurance that no competition in standards will occur between one part of the country and the other as a result of this very effective co-ordinating process.

I think that probably some hon. members, either deliberately or merely for the sake of hearing the debate or hearing themselves in the debate, seemed to be somewhat confused about Canada's constitutional make-up when they discussed the needs for federal-provincial co-ordination. What would the hon. members do? Do they want to abolish the rights of the ten provincial governments so that a federal minister could co-ordinate the provincial policies and programs?

We recognize the individual roles of government in this bill, as does perhaps no other piece of legislation, in an area of divided jurisdiction. We have provided for new forms of consultation for the examination of water resource problems and the determination of priorities. We have provided for step by step consultation and agreements for joint planning and implementation of water resource programs. If hon. members will examine this bill closely, they will find in it a major advance in the area of co-operation and co-ordination.

I think there was some criticism of the need to work with the United States to solve the problems of Lake Erie and other international waters. In this regard, I have already held discussions with my U.S. counterpart, and, as a matter of fact, senior officials in my department are meeting with U.S. officials today here in Ottawa. The next step will be another ministerial meeting next month. We are particularly anxious to respond to the recommendations of the International Joint Commission, and to encourage a joint approach to the water quality problems of the Great Lakes.

Hon. members opposite have made a number of recommendations regarding the financing of pollution control. If they examined the bill, they would note that it contains provisions for joint federal-provincial financing of the planning and implementation of programs. They will note that the amended bill provides for loans for the implementation of provisions on water quality, operating expenses and capital works. The suggestion for low interest loans would involve subsidizing the polluters.