

Clean Air Act

questions that the minister will have to answer in the committee. If Ottawa does not have special agreements with the provinces, then the standards will certainly not be national.

When we are discussing these things in the committee we can quote the very tough terms the Minister used within the past year or so, and even recently in this House as recorded at page 2830 of *Hansard*:

—why run the risk of losing everything when uniform national standards can provide us with all the protection we need?

He has talked in that way about air and water. But now, we find that according to this bill that attitude depends on agreements with the provinces.

Mr. Davis: That is not true.

Mr. Comeau: That might not be true, and if it is not then I can be corrected in committee. The parliamentary secretary can talk for himself. I am just raising these questions because there has not been enough time to examine the bill thoroughly. We have had only ten days.

● (12:40 p.m.)

Another of the seven main points deals with the right to set emission standards in the case of federal works. This is good. First of all, we must set an example before trying to impose on others things we are not willing to do ourselves. I mentioned at one point the matter of agreements between the provinces. I think the minister dealt with this when introducing the bill. We have read what he intends to do in that regard. The sixth point has to do with inspectors, analysts and so on. As I understand the bill, an inspector may enter premises emitting air pollutants and take samples. After that, I suspect he will make a report and see that the law is enforced. The other point I wish to deal with in general at this time is this. The public must be assured that their rights are protected.

Having alluded to all these points, may I now return to the question of national standards, or emission standards as they are called, or to the guidelines which are discussed throughout the bill. So far as I can see, nothing in this bill tells us what these guidelines or standards are. They have not yet been established and there is no information as to when they will be established. Therefore, this bill cannot be implemented until the guidelines or so-called national standards are set out. This omission is typical of the government. When dealing with the question of oil pollution under the Canada Shipping Act, it did the same sort of thing. This happened three of four months ago. The government said to shipowners that their ships could not enter Canadian waters until a federal pollution inspector had inspected the ship. However, the owners do not know what standards the ships must meet if they are to operate in Canada under the law.

The same sort of thinking applies to these so-called national standards and guidelines. The regulations have not yet been promulgated and this bill cannot be implemented until that has been done. I hope that when the

[Mr. Comeau.]

minister first appears before the committee he will say to us, "Look here, these are the types of regulations that we shall be issuing." Unless those regulations are established, we are wasting our time here. Unless those regulations are established, the people will be able to say that the government is introducing this legislation for political show, to make people believe that it wants to clean up the air. Without regulations the legislation is meaningless. I ask, in the absence of regulations how is an inspector to know whether sources of potential pollution are meeting national standards? How is he to know what those standards are, when the criterion for those standards has not yet been established? How is an inspector to judge these matters until these regulations are promulgated?

The bill relies solely on agreements with the provinces. Before any positive action can be taken, there must be agreement. This part has been included in the bill in good faith, as I understand. It is hoped that there will be agreement with the provinces. I should be interested to see what initiatives the government will take to make sure that every province has comparable legislation or is willing to accept the provisions of the present legislation. That is why I say that more than one week is necessary for the study of this matter if we are to discover from the provinces whether they are able to accept what is in the bill or whether there is to be any comparable provincial legislation.

I return to the question of standards. Although the bill speaks of what the minister calls national standards, these standards in reality are a little bit of window dressing. Inasmuch as those standards can be applied to federal works undertaken by business, they can be called national standards, I suppose. But they can only be enforced in the provinces if the provinces agree. If the province concerned agrees to the standards, everything is fine. However, if the province does not agree to accept these so-called national standards, then there is absolutely nothing that the federal government can do to implement those standards in the province in question.

Mr. Davis: That is not correct.

Mr. Comeau: If that is not correct, I hope that the minister will explain these matters in committee; because that is how it appears to me.

Mr. Aiken: Challenge the minister.

Mr. Comeau: This is my interpretation. I challenge the minister to tell us where the Bill makes provision for this. I see the parliamentary secretary is making a note to tell us in his reply where the bill provides for the establishment of national air quality standards.

Mr. Aiken: It does not.

Mr. Comeau: Where in this bill is there language setting out national air quality standards?

Mr. Aiken: It is not in the bill.