

*Water Resources Programs*

from seeking low cost, low standard pollution havens. National standards will protect those provinces and areas which want to clean up pollution against provinces and areas which fail to act. By not instituting over-all standards, the federal government might well slow up pollution campaigns in those provinces that want to get on with the task yet cannot afford to lose industry and jobs by demanding standards higher than other areas. This point has been made to the federal government by the provinces, but seems to have been totally ignored. The lack of federal interest and initiative in this respect is discouraging. It is a sure sign that the federal approach to the problem is faulty and has been poorly planned.

The setting of national standards for various classes of water makes sense. We do not hesitate to set national standards for certain types of pollutants such as phosphate detergents, the use of DDT, the methods to be used in oil drilling, etc. The Fisheries Act contains broad national standards which can be enforced in the fight against pollution. It is not only members of the opposition who are calling for national standards. A number of the provinces want them. This was clearly indicated to the federal government at the federal-provincial conference held in Ottawa on February 16 and 17 of this year. The submissions made by the provinces at that time are interesting and informative. It is no wonder that the government tried to keep this information from the committee when it was studying the Canada Water Act.

At the conference, the province of Alberta urged that the federal government's role should be the establishment of national minimum standards for water quality, backed by tough statutory penalties applicable to all offenders, public, private or otherwise. It felt that the question of how such standards were met or maintained should be the responsibility of the provinces, and it pointed out that the working relationship with a province should be similar to that which has long applied under criminal law. Alberta pointed out that the right of the federal government to enforce national minimum standards is essential in the interest of preventing unfair industrial competition between provinces, as otherwise there might be a temptation for a province to compromise on water quality standards. Not only would that approach place responsibility for pollution control directly on the offenders and hold the provinces responsible for primary enforcement,

but it would also avoid the establishment of another expensive bureaucracy of the type envisioned under the proposed Canada Water Act. The Alberta brief pointed out that, in the final analysis, it is not industry but the consumer who must pay the price of industrial pollution control. The important factor, therefore, was that all industry be subject to the same basic pollution control requirements which, in turn, required the establishment of national water standards or pollution criteria.

• (3:10 p.m.)

The Saskatchewan brief pointed out that common water quality standards are being widely advocated. It supported the idea of using common criteria on a national basis to assess the degree of pollution in water supplies. The province was hesitant to accept the concept of national minimum standards because such standards often became the maximum requirements. Saskatchewan felt common standards on a regional or river basin basis was more practical.

The brief for the province of British Columbia called for the formulation of common interprovincial and provincial-federal approaches, uniform minimum objectives of waste treatment and control and target dates for such control. It felt that efficient intergovernmental communication could be achieved by creating an intergovernmental body representing the responsible single agencies. British Columbia felt the Canadian Council of Resource Ministers would be an effective vehicle to consider this problem. The brief pointed out that the proposed Canada Water Act will not create a nationwide uniform approach to water management or pollution prevention, but would destroy the existing provincewide concepts by creating a confusing mix of federal, joint federal-provincial and provincial legislative programs and institutions with their overlapping federal and provincial jurisdictions and administrations.

The province of Manitoba pointed out that unless there was strong federal co-ordination, those provinces which applied adequate anti-pollution standards would be placed at a decided disadvantage in the competition for industrial development. Here again, Mr. Speaker, province after province is worried about this piecemeal approach to the pollution problem but the federal government, it appears, has completely ignored many of the representations made by the provinces. Going back to the position taken by Manitoba, that