

Northern Inland Waters Bill

that exactly is the purpose of the Canada Water Act. I therefore ask again, why is this bill being introduced?

[*Translation*]

Here again, I have nothing to say against the minister on that matter but the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) has no confidence in Bill C-144, concerning water management. It is obvious now that Bill C-144 regarding the management of the water resources of Canada cannot cope with all the problems in the North and the complex problems of Canadian waters. Here is exactly the position adopted by our party in this regard. The only reason I can see why the minister introduced this bill is that he places no reliance on Bill C-144, no more than the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry for that matter.

[*English*]

The definition of water, according to clause 2(1) is as follows:

"waters" means waters in any river, stream, lake or other body of inland water on the surface or underground in the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories.

Does this pertain simply to fresh water, or does it include any waters inside the boundary lines, as suggested by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) the other day? The bill is poorly drafted, because it does not say what it means. Is this bill supposed to be the one dealing with Arctic pollution? Obviously, the government does not know how to tackle our water management problems, including that of pollution. Look at the bits and pieces of legislation this government has introduced! We have objected to that during the past five months. Look at all the amendments to existing legislation that will have to be considered. Obviously, government members do nothing during the summer recess except go on holiday.

The problem this bill seeks to deal with has been with us for a long time, but the government is not making a concentrated effort in this field. Instead, it is simply bringing in bits and pieces of legislation. The government has not looked at the total problem of pollution and water management. It acts on impulse. One matter after another comes up. If a bill dealing with pollution is defective, an amendment is brought in. Now, the government is concerned about phosphates; soon it may deal with other forms of detergents. At present we are concerned about the north, and so it goes. Why does the government not do a good job and do it once? I, therefore, say that this bill

[*Mr. Comeau.*]

is redundant; it is useless and we will oppose it. Furthermore, it is an insult to the efforts of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. R. J. Orange (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take too much of the time of the House discussing this piece of legislation before us today. However, I would like to say I welcome the initiative of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) in bringing forward this inland waters bill relating to the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories.

I believe, contrary to the emotional outburst of the hon. member who has just taken his seat, that the bringing forward of this piece of legislation is a recognition on the part of the government that the northern territories, both the Yukon and Northwest Territories, some day in some way will develop into provinces of this country.

This bill is the other side of the Canada Water Act. It complements the Canada Water Act. It provides in the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory implementation of the Canada Water Act in the same way as we would in Ontario through provincial legislation. In this respect, there are other regulations and legislation which apply exclusively to the two northern territories. I am thinking now of the Oil and Gas Conservation Act passed by the House last year; the Yukon Placer Mining Act and many other acts which affect the resources of northern Canada.

As I read this inland waters bill, it is not intended primarily to examine the question of sovereignty because it applies to the waters within the mainland of the Arctic islands. We have all expressed our own views with regard to the issue of sovereignty. However, I see no way that this piece of legislation is related to the question of sovereignty over the waters of the Canadian Arctic.

By virtue of introducing this act, and bringing it into effect we will be able to control the use and development of the water resources of these areas in northern Canada. I acknowledge the minister's initiative in this respect because, in the past, these waters could have been subject to misuse had there been economic development. We have the example of Yellowknife Bay where the people were concerned every spring because of the arsenic run-off from two gold mines in the area. As Yellowknife grew, there was a need to find a new supply of water in co-operation