

Water Resources Programs

member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding). All the minister wants is the standard that somebody else imposes on him.

The minister makes a great parade or fetish of the situation. The minister says he has entered into negotiations with the ten provinces, but far be it from him to dicker and negotiate with them on standards or classes. He is going to do what he is told. Why in heaven's name have we had 769 pages of debate, plus a couple of pages of palaver which have been added by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, if the federal authority is not going to take a role in dealing with the water problems of Canada? Why make the palaver if he is going to the lowest common denominator of doing what somebody else tells him must be done and not trying to assert authority in this field?

The minister has asked if we would like an important bill. The answer is yes, we do want an important bill. We also want answers to our questions and amendments to the bill before us. If the amendments to the bill before us are accepted, then and only then will we have an important bill. If not, we will have the weakest form of legislation that this Parliament can offer.

There is something nice about this minister. He has honestly earned the position of being an Abe Lincoln in this particular political business in which we are involved. This is not because he has had a press agent running in advance of him. The minister has a good home-spun quality. Unfortunately, Abe's more direct thinking has been replaced by the somewhat more circuitous device that Mr. Gardiner used to perpetrate on this House. None the less, this minister is our equivalent of Abe Lincoln. When it comes to splitting anything into parts, he can split with the best that Abe Lincoln ever did.

We have watched this minister. In Denver he was dynamite. Nationalism, government supreme, stand up for your rights. In Toronto he made the remark referred to by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken). I will read it again plus another paragraph:

"We shall have to maintain some very strong inputs in the authorities to assure that standards for comparable bodies of water will be the same in all parts of Canada," he said.

"In fact, the federal input on all agencies assures that—it negates the fears some have voiced that there will be competition with the dirtier the province the more attractive it will be to industry. It's the federal membership on each water quality agency that assures the continuity across Canada."

[Mr. McCleave.]

Mr. Greene: Now, you have got it straight!

Mr. McCleave: I am glad that the minister also agrees with the second part of the statement. A few moments ago he agreed with the first part when it was quoted by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. The Denver dynamite has become the Toronto tiger! He was still speaking with that same strong, authoritative voice which indicated that he was going to do something about the natural resources.

In a 40 minute speech in this House of Commons the minister has misinterpreted, if I can use that mild word, what he did say and what is argued by the proposers of the two motions we are now considering. The minister says we cannot have standards all across Canada, the standards must be weighed by the water basin approach or dealt with on the constitutional basis. In other words, the Toronto Tiger has completely yanked out its own fangs; the Denver Dynamiter, the Toronto Tiger, becomes the Ottawa Ostrich on this important subject.

• (4:50 p.m.)

Mr. Greene: An ostrich does not put his head in water.

Mr. McCleave: If the minister had his way, water quality or standards would evaporate to sand or silt.

Mr. Osler: Would the hon. member permit a question? Did the hon. member take the pledge to be relevant and to the point, as did certain of his hon. friends, from this time on?

Mr. McCleave: Yes. I am glad the hon. member asked that particular question. To judge by his contributions in the House, he needs guidance, perhaps strong guidance. I suggest he would not get it from the statement of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources this afternoon. Time and time again, the minister talked about single standards. As has been pointed out several times, the recommendation of the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau) did not use that phrase at all. In other words, the Toronto Tiger set up a paper target and proceeded to chew it all over the place. But he did not meet the point of the hon. member for South Western Nova head on.

In today's Routine Proceedings, on page five, hon. members who care to join me in glancing at the top two paragraphs will find exactly what we are asking here.

6A. (1) Forthwith upon the coming into force of this Act, the Governor in Council, upon the rec-