

Canadian Pollution Awareness Week

somewhat greater capacity than we give her credit for to cope with natural disasters.

While we are on the subject of the bill, Mr. Speaker, another area of education which could certainly be undertaken covers some of the positive advantages. For the last 23 years or so, oil drilling has taken place in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of the United States. In that time, over 11,000 wells have been drilled and of these only 30 have gone out of control. During the same period in the same area, commercial fishing has soared while in other waters it has declined. During the past decade the commercial fish catch in U.S. waters off New England, the middle-Atlantic, the south Atlantic and off the west coast declined by as much as 750 million pounds. In the Gulf it increased by 600 million pounds. Commercial fishing in the Gulf landed only 250 million pounds in 1940, 800 million pounds in 1955, and in 1969 this increased to 1.6 billion pounds.

The safe production of petroleum products in offshore areas is crucial. No one is suggesting that anyone should proceed with this activity if there is danger to the ecology or to nature, but the fact is that it is of great value to humanity to develop safe ways of getting petroleum from under the sea. Estimated reserves of offshore areas total about 20 per cent of the world's reserves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Very respectfully, I bring to the attention of the Parliamentary Secretary that the bill the House is considering is a very short and simple one. Perhaps the Parliamentary Secretary would assist me by relating to the bill his remarks on petroleum exploration.

Mr. Mahoney: Mr. Speaker, it was my impression that the intention of the bill was to designate a Canadian national pollution awareness week. Therefore, I would have thought that awareness of some of the more dramatic and spectacular causes of pollution would be related to the subject matter of the bill. This question has been to the forefront in Canada, certainly during the life of the current Parliament.

I do not regard the form letter as a particularly effective method of political pressure, but a year ago in Calgary there was an effective form letter, prepared by school children, urging action with respect to pollution. One of the recommendations in the letter was that we be limited to one automobile per family. It is interesting that in the letters sent to me by the students themselves, this recommendation was retained—but in four out of five of the letters they had induced their parents to sign, the parents had scratched out that particular recommendation. This only confirms my impression that while almost every intelligent person is concerned about pollution, very few are prepared to admit that they, as individuals, are contributing to it. Consistent with that attitude, they do not see why they should be expected to change their habits, much less make any sacrifice in comfort, convenience or efficiency in the interest of reducing or eliminating a source of pollution.

There are very few, if any, sources of pollution that do not have people, human activity, at their root. Only those involving human activity can be successfully legislated

[Mr. Mahoney.]

against. Workable regulations to limit and to reserve pollution will in every case demand that some people change their ways. Of course, we are all for that until we find that we are expected to make the sacrifice because we believe—sincerely, I am sure—that the benefit of our particular activity far outweighs its cost to the environment. The attitude is: Let us by all means render the pulp and paper industry uneconomic by shutting down all the old mills until effective antipollution devices are invented and installed, but do not ask me to stop idling my car on a winter's morning or burning autumn leaves.

That is why I say the purpose of this bill, the desire to pinpoint the significance of pollution in all ways, the significance of the cost of pollution to our environment and to our society, the benefits of controlling and reversing it, and the cost that we must pay in achieving that benefit, must all be made known to the public before emotional steps are taken. That is why I heartily endorse the purpose of the bill and hope it goes to committee.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I had a speech prepared to deliver on this most interesting bill, but since it seems to be the disposition of the House to get on with this important measure I shall only say that I take great pleasure in supporting the bill. I listened with amazement to the irrelevant remarks of the Parliamentary Secretary, who literally polluted the air with his verbal barrage. I can only say that he is not genuinely concerned for this bill, moved by his colleague in all good faith. But I assure the hon. member that we on this side of the House support him. We support his intention, we commend him for it and we hope the bill passes.

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): Mr. Speaker, on rising to take part in the discussion on the bill proposed by the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond-Delta (Mr. Goode) I say at once that I and my colleagues have no objection to passing it. I do not think it will do any particular good, but on the other hand, unlike some of the other proposals put forward from the government side, I do not think it will do any particular harm.

The hon. member and I come from the lower mainland of British Columbia. That part of Canada needs no pollution awareness week to make its people aware of pollution. The people in the lower mainland of B.C. are aware of it 52 weeks of every year: they are aware of pollution by land, sea, air and sound. In that area, one half of one per cent of the land area of the province, live half the population of the province; and as somebody said earlier, where there is a concentration of people, you have potential pollution. We have real pollution in our area. For one thing, we have the Fraser River winding like a sewer through the lower mainland, polluted for years with the discharge of residential and industrial waste. Just recently a survey was made of it by a voluntary organization called SPEC. Some 51 students did an excellent job studying pollution of the Fraser. They presented a report incorporating detailed anti-pollution measures. That report is very appropriate to our discussions today.

• (4:30 p.m.)

As I say, the proposal put forward by the hon. member will do no harm, but I do not think it will do any good. It