

*Water Resources Programs*

long advocated by my party, we certainly welcome it. The bill itself does not mention national standards, and nowhere in our committee discussions was it indicated that there would be national standards. All the opposition parties strongly pressed during the committee hearings for the adoption of a set of national standards to deal with the various types of waters across Canada. In fact, both the Official Opposition and my party moved amendments to that effect in the House, urging that national standards be established to deal with the pollution problems facing our nation but those amendments were defeated.

We are not opposed to water basin management, but this is not spelled out in the bill. Members of the government talk vaguely about having water basin management. The bill calls for the setting up of water quality management areas, but such an area could cover just a small portion of a river basin. There is nothing in the bill to indicate that a whole river basin will be dealt with as a unit. An example which I have given on numerous occasions is the move to set up a water quality management area with respect to the lower Fraser River in British Columbia. It may cover only the last 30 miles of the Fraser before it runs into the sea. The entire upper stretch of that vast salmon River basin will not be touched. There is nothing in the bill to provide that the management area cover the whole basin. I tell the Parliamentary Secretary that it is no use trying to kid the people of Canada and the members of this House on that score.

I give another example with respect to Ontario. Again, I challenge the Parliamentary Secretary to say it is not a fact that you can have two rivers running side by side into the Great Lakes, with a water quality management area established for each river, and each such area allowed to set its own standards. This is what the big debate has been about for months. If this happens, such areas will become pollution havens for industry. Surely, members of the cabinet must realize this is the situation. These areas will compete with each other for industry. How will they compete, Mr. Speaker? They will compete by deliberately lowering their standards in order to attract industry to their own regions. That is why the New Democratic Party and the other opposition parties have called for broad national standards to stop the establishment of pollution havens, something which can and probably will occur under the provisions of the bill.

Earlier the Parliamentary Secretary indicated that members of the government were now talking about setting up a set of guidelines or regulations for similar river basins. This is a step forward and we would endorse it. The members of the committee who are here today know that this was not the indication when the bill was in committee.

● (4:20 p.m.)

There are a few points on which I would like to speak generally, Mr. Speaker. I believe the pollution problem facing the entire world today is one of the most important problems we have. There is no doubt that it is a man-made crisis. We have so befouled our environment that the whole world is in trouble. We have reached the stage where our water, our air, our soil is so badly polluted that the existence of mankind is threatened.

I find it amazing that we are here debating the Canada Water Act, which partially deals with pollution, when we should be debating an environmental act. In this session we should have legislation dealing with standards for air and land pollution. Ecologists at the United Nations and in many countries have been warning governments that the problem should be tackled now, before it is too late. This government is going to delay legislation on air pollution until the next session of Parliament. This means the problem will drift on and on, and it is unlikely that action will be taken before the fall of 1971.

Air pollution is damaging the health of those who live in cities, in the vast urban areas of the world. It is threatening the very existence of human beings on earth. There is the problem of the motor car, the burning of fossil fuels, the increase of carbon dioxide in the air. Then comes the problem of pesticides and ddt. In Canada, there is a partial ban on ddt already. The ecologists of the world are warning us that the ecology of the oceans, the ecology of the rivers and lakes is being disturbed to the point where we are in danger of losing the oxygen producing sections of that ecology. But still we delay, Mr. Speaker, and take the easy approach. Don't hurry; take another year or two. What difference does it make as far as mankind is concerned. We find that there is hardly a square foot of the surface of the earth not affected by ddt. It is carried by air currents to the Antarctic, to the north, to the most remote islands in the ocean—there is not an animal, bird or human being that does not have ddt in its system.