

*Water Resources*

the government to act under the authority contained in the regulations under the Fisheries Act. In connection with this point, I wish to suggest that I do not believe Canadians are afraid to spend the required dollars and cents in respect of water purity and water control, if those expenditures will mean that incidents such as occurred in Newfoundland will not take place in the future. Indeed, on the contrary, I think any national sampling of opinion would indicate approval for the immediate and urgent expenditure of money. I am concerned about the salt water immediately off both our coasts. I am concerned about the failure of the minister and the government to include any meaningful thoughts in their present bill.

It is rather interesting to note that the bill simply refers to water and does not define salt water or fresh water. I have not heard anyone imply that the bill is to cover salt water, so I am making the assumption that it does not and that the bill was designed to cover only inland fresh water systems. I am disturbed about this because even a casual study of the efforts of other maritime nations around the world with regard to the water over the continental shelves lying off their immediate coasts suggests they have a real concern and one which Canada has not begun to approach. We have a continental shelf covered with water to the extent of some 1½ million square miles. That is almost half of Canada's total land area. The failure of the government to deal, in this bill, even in passing, with the danger to Canadians and to the world through pollution of these waters is inexcusable. It is very difficult to understand. Indeed, I suppose in many respects it displays a weakness of thought and unconcern with the question.

I sometimes wonder, because the pressure to do something about pollution has grown so rapidly in the last two or three years, whether there was a politically motivated fear that if the government did not do something that failure might be misconstrued. I suggest that if the government had any strong or moral convictions, it would have done something meaningful and useful for Canadians.

It is interesting to note that there has been no comment on this bill from large Canadian industries. I sometimes wonder whether they are just sitting back, keeping their fingers crossed, in the hope that nobody will find what they consider to be the glaring omissions from this bill.

[Mr. Forrestall.]

• (4:10 p.m.)

It is not my desire to deal today with the inland or fresh waters; I wish to stay, if I can, with the subject of the off-shore waters, the salt waters. In recent years we have witnessed the failure of the federal government to resolve satisfactorily the question of off-shore mineral rights. In this field alone there has been considerable delay in the application of applied research to methods of reaching the resources of the sea. This is simply a consequence of the government's failure or inability to resolve the more fundamental question. Today we are talking about water rather than minerals, but the connection is an obvious one. If we have failed to resolve so straightforward a matter as the ownership or right of interest in the mineral contents of the continental shelf, how in the name of the Lord shall we ever resolve the question raised by effective control over the quality of our coastal waters?

In the years ahead, life on earth may well depend on the quality of our water. In an age in which we talk about famine and starvation and when doubts are expressed as to the ability of the planet to feed mankind in the not too distant future, it seems extremely shortsighted to me that we have not turned much sooner in our development to the resource that is the sea. Some day we shall, and I hope that when this day comes our people will be able to look back to the closing years of the 20th century and say: Some Canadians were concerned; some people, at least, were beginning to protect the quality and the purity of our salt waters. Failure to do so now would represent an abdication of our responsibility and duty to future generations. If we fail to act now, what is there to show that the next generation will take the step we should have taken? If we intend to do something, let us do it today, let us do it this year—let us establish guidelines and enforce meaningful ways to control the pollution of our salt waters.

I am not one of those who believe we shall never clean up our fresh waters. I believe we shall. Significant work is going on now at Burlington, the inland centre for fresh water studies. But it is a damned shame nothing is going on at the Bedford Institute of Oceanology with regard to this question—as a matter of fact, it is inexcusable. If we do not find a way to approach our neighbours in the maritime communities around the world, if we have not by the turn of this century effectively established minimum standards for the protection of the quality of these salt waters,