

Water Resources Programs

tively in order to try to achieve optimum standards for each water basin of Canada.

Motion No. 14 was originally defeated in committee on those grounds which I mentioned in the first part of my remarks. We are not seeking a standardization of quality levels, but optimum levels for each water body. If the author of this amendment is seeking for uniformity in the approach to the setting of standards, I refer him to clause 16(1)(c) which prescribes the procedure to be followed by each agency in determining recommendations with respect to water quality standards. That is all I wish to say on these amendments at this time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Greene: Hon. members opposite pressed me sincerely to speak, and now that I have spoken they either do not approve of what I said or do not understand what I said.

Mr. Peters: We want to be enlightened.

Mr. Greene: This question has been debated in this session and the previous session to the tune of thousands of words and I am beginning to wonder whether some hon. members, at least, really wish to understand this matter or really wish to see a statute that will specify the optimum quality of water in each of our water basins, or whether they merely want a debate.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Mr. Aiken: May I ask the minister a question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Prior to doing that, I must inform the House that the minister's time has expired. If there is consent to allow the minister extra time, and provided the minister will entertain questions, we will proceed in that way. Is there unanimous agreement?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Aiken: I rose on a point of order before the minister spoke to ask him to reply to a statement that was attributed to him in this morning's *Globe and Mail*. I ask the minister to tell the House whether he used those words. The minister is supposed to have said:

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

These words are in quotes. They are attributed to the minister by a reporter,

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Thomas Claridge, who purports to have spoken to him. Are these words very close to what the minister said?

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times in this House and in committee, for a comparable body of water in one part of the country and another, we will have to have the same standard. I refer to where there is a comparable volume of water, comparable quality and the same mixes of uses of that water. It is not likely that there will be two identical bodies of water in different parts of Canada. That is why we cannot have these uniform standards that sound so simply delightful.

There are not two major basins of water in Canada that are exactly the same. By some magic formula, we cannot manage and control the quality of those waters. Of course, we are trying to achieve uniformity through the procedures, the act, federal presence, water basin authority, the co-ordination of 13 departments under the interdepartmental committee on water and through the cabinet determining whether funds will be available for the implementation of plans. Certainly, that kind of uniformity will be achieved. This is the only practical way under our constitution, as is envisaged by the bill itself.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) has made an interesting speech. The spirit of J. G. Gardiner has been reincarnated in the House of Commons. During a debate on wheat, through a skilful process, Jimmy Gardiner could lead you right into a coal mine. The minister by his use, misuse or abuse of words, has led us on exactly the same sort of path. To put it succinctly and hammer it into the minister's head, he did not like it when I raised this question.

When the minister talks about standards, is he talking about canoeing standards, fishing standards, drinking standards, industrial standards or simply looking at a body of water in the moonlight and trying to write poetry as a result of that gaze? The speech the minister has made is open to that interpretation. The minister's speech can be summed up by simply saying that he does not want minimal water quality standards, the phrase used by the hon. member for South Western Nova (Mr. Comeau), or specific water quality standards and levels applicable to all bodies of water, the phrase used by the hon.