

Water Resources

man, has enough brains to enable him to control these scientific processes in time to prevent the pollution of the environment and his own destruction by his own technology. This is a case in point. I think it is completely wrong to allow these conflicts of interest to go on, as well as entirely unfair to the men who are placed in these impossible situations. They are gagged, bound and helpless from the point of view of being public servants. I believe it is wrong to put people into positions where conflicts of interest can threaten their usefulness to the people of this country. And it is lethal to the people that such situations should exist.

I want to appeal to the minister to take a hard look at this legislation when it goes to the committee. I appeal to him to acknowledge that this bill is not an anti-pollution measure and that sooner or later the Canadian people, when they are up against it, will recognize that it is not.

What this bill desperately needs is some provision by which municipal bodies would receive funds for the establishment and improvement of sewage plants, either by way of a shared program between the provincial governments and Ottawa or by some other means of making grants available for such a purpose. In the second place, the minister must take action to ban the use of phosphate detergents completely. One of my hon. friends said earlier that there might need to be a time lag. I think the target date of the International Joint Commission, 1972 for Lake Erie, is a good one. A time lag of that length would give an opportunity for readjustment. But the idea of a time lag extending until the detergent companies and ERCO have unloaded their supplies of phosphate on the unsuspecting people of this country is not my idea of the way in which this should be done. It would be too long. It might well be too late.

That is all I have to say, Mr. Speaker. I hope it is enough to ensure that some action, at least, is taken to ensure that we have an effective Canada water act when it comes back again to this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, before the hon. lady sits down may I say that I was not too sure whether she was in favour of the basic premise contained in the bill, namely that the polluter should pay for rehabilitating the water, or whether in fact water quality

[Mrs. MacInnis.]

should be achieved by the rehabilitation or by restricting the use of various substances, the cost being met out of general tax revenue.

Mrs. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, I believe the people causing the pollution ought to pay for preventing pollution; and pollution should be prevented by keeping it out of the water in the first place. In other words, industry should see to it that it adopts methods that cut out pollution entirely.

I do not know whether it is possible to do this in every case straight away or in the period I have suggested. However, from everything that I have learned about pollution, detergents are far and away the biggest single pollutant. An alternative to detergents has been discovered and is already in use in Sweden, and I suggest that there is a good place to begin. I suggest a ban be imposed on phosphate detergents, to take effect not later than 1972, which I do not think would be unrealistic. In fact, this is probably the best solution that could be devised.

I did not go into all of the other forms of pollution this afternoon so I am not prepared to say what should be done in regard to them. I have confined myself strictly to detergents because it is detergents that are threatening the very life of our biggest lakes.

I do not want to go further afield since I have not had time to study other pollutants, but I am sure of the facts that I have put on the record this afternoon. I believe there is a good place to begin, and no doubt other members will suggest other remedies. But certainly the polluter should be responsible for the cost of eliminating his pollution; and wherever possible pollution ought to be eliminated at its very source.

Mr. Colin D. Gibson (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, the bill before the House today will have wide repercussions on the development of Canada as a healthy resource controlling nation, a nation which is opening up new frontiers in every direction and, at the same time, is conscious of the need to preserve our environment free from the curse of pollution.

I commend the minister for a very forward looking piece of legislation. I also commend him—and here I disagree with the comments of the last speaker—for the flexibility of drafting. The bill is designed to adapt itself to differing water conditions throughout an intensely diverse water-supplied country.

Mr. McGrath: Save your breath.