

*Request for Environmental Council*

concerned it intended to divide up the area in another way.

So far as the Canada Water Act is concerned, the federal government has said it intends to insist that the matter be handled on a water basin or regional area basis. This has not worked out. There have been a number of agreements with the provinces which show some promise of future activity, but in large part there have been only studies. Studies are fine. However, the problem in respect of the program is that for the first three or four years of its existence most of the time has been spent on studies. Then, when the results of the studies are made known the government is not satisfied with them, finds they did not turn out the way they wished or decides that the studies themselves are ambiguous. Difficult decisions must be made, and yet these decisions have not been made.

Another so-called piece of pollution legislation consists of the amendments to the Canada Shipping Act regarding coastal pollution. Although this act applies to all Canadian waters, it will not be as effective off the west coast of Canada as off the east coast. There are inequities and gaps in the adoption of the regulations under this Act. My colleague, the hon. member for Halifax-Dartmouth East (Mr. Forrestall) intends to deal with this aspect later in this debate, because this is a matter which has concerned him very much, as well as others, and he has been asking questions almost daily on this particular subject.

Another thing I lay at the doorstep of this government as a failure is its inability to make hard decisions. If we look just at the great environmental issues we face at the moment, we will see that this is true. There is a great project for hydro-electric development in the James Bay area proposed by the government of Quebec. There is federal involvement because the closing of navigable waters must be approved by the federal government. There is federal involvement in respect of Indian affairs, environmental affairs and so on. Yet at the moment we have been left completely in the dark concerning where the federal government stands in respect of this project. I recognize that this is not an easy matter with which to deal. The federal government must decide now or shortly whether or not it will agree to this project.

Daily we have been asking, over a period of months now, about the federal involvement in this project and have received no answers. The only inkling we received was in a statement by Premier Bourassa of the province of Quebec. He stated he had been talking to the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) about this problem recently. That came out in a news report, but the Prime Minister of Canada has not acknowledged in the House that he has even discussed or considered it. For months we have had nothing but evasive answers. We have not even had an indication that the federal government intends to take the situation seriously and say it is in favour of the project, that it is against the project or that it intends to impose certain conditions. The Prime Minister has not made his position abundantly clear to either the House or to the premier of Quebec.

There is also a decision to be made in respect of the carriage of Arctic gas and oil from Alaska to the mainland of the United States. It must either cross or come close to Canadian soil in such a way that there will be

[Mr. Aiken.]

environmental danger. Yesterday the United States government indicated that a study of this project had been made. A four volume report was tabled at two o'clock yesterday, and the summary we have received is to the effect that the general report indicates there are dangers involved in both routes but that perhaps the overland route is the one that would be most satisfactory to the United States.

This report deals only with the United States. It must decide what is most advantageous for it. The report refers to security—security of the oil passage and security in respect of being able to get that oil regardless of hostile acts from within this country. This is one of the things they are thinking about. I do not know why this aspect has never been considered before. However, a good deal of the report covers the question of security of the oil lines. There seems to be some concern about whether the oil can be moved from Alaska to the United States without any interference from us. I have not seen any evidence that the government of Canada intends to hold public hearings, establish a parliamentary committee to look into the matter, or make a decision.

• (1530)

The special committee on pollution was anxious last year to look into this subject and some hearings were held but nothing final was produced because the committee did not go on a tour as they desired. Perhaps it would have been a good thing to do. In any case, no studies have been made by Canada. When on earth are we going to start, because the Americans are ready to make a decision? They are ready to grant a shipping line permit because that is the easiest and the quickest route, but so far as Canada is concerned it is probably the most dangerous. We do not know whether they are going to make such a decision within days or weeks, but certainly they are going to make it without any indication from this country as to how we feel about it. The decision will be made by the United States strictly on the basis of what they feel will be in the interest of their own security.

There is also the matter of the Great Lakes clean-up. Unfortunately, this work has been stalled, and yet this is a gigantic problem involving two federal governments, one provincial and eight states as well as several other governing bodies. But we have had no decision on that. I was very heartened today during the question period when I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) a question about the decisions, announcements or agreements that may be made when President Nixon comes here next month regarding the pipeline problem or the Great Lakes problem, and he intimated—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but, in accordance with the special order made today, I must advise him that his time has expired.

[Translation]

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the motion of the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding) which reads as follows:

This House expresses the view that in order to protect and preserve our environment, immediate national standards for environmental quality must be set for air, water and land, it being clear that these standards must be set for all pollutants, that they