

Alleged Lack of Action to Combat Pollution

We made detailed and exhaustive studies of the subject matter under debate, pollution, and we came up with a unanimous report. It was not a majority report, Mr. Speaker; it was one that was agreed to by all members of all parties. That took place only three weeks ago. May I now refer to some of the highlights of the report. I quote from the committee report:

Your Committee recommends that as soon as possible—

That means as soon as financially possible.

—the government allocate more money for scientific research projects that are now under way, as well as to continue new programs for the future.

That paragraph obviously refers to scientific projects launched by the federal government. I continue quoting:

The Committee wishes to state that it has been greatly impressed by the contributions from the Canadian science community and commends all personnel involved in scientific progress in Canada on their achievements.

That paragraph obviously refers to leadership in the water pollution study. Another paragraph of the report read:

The Committee commends the government on the establishment of the Inland Waters Centre at Burlington and the work being carried out there on water pollution research. We recommend that this be given full and increased assistance and that other complementary centres be set up where needed.

The hon. member for Kootenay West said that the recommendations of the report were good and he is still of that opinion. He went on to complain about lack of action and gave some examples of pollution. I do not quarrel with the stand he took on the deplorable situations he described, but each and every one was clearly of provincial concern. I suggest he would have been better to have written to his premier or he could send him a copy of his speech.

An. hon. Member: Here we go again.

Mr. Chappell: He also said that since the provinces had been in default in not acting, we, the federal government, should act. I point out to the hon. member for Kootenay West, the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka and the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) that three weeks ago when we sat together drafting this report we said:

Your Committee is concerned by increasing magnitude of air, water and soil pollution and the jurisdictional conflict which hampers the finding and the implementing of proper solutions.

[Mr. Chappell.]

Your Committee recommends that the government draft a code of standards for the cleaning up of and the future protection of all Canadian waters; that provincial approval of such a code be sought; and that the federal government provide an enforcement procedure—if necessary by means of an amendment to the criminal code.

Your Committee also recommends that a centre or centres similar to the Canada Centre for Inland Waters be set up to centralize all existing and future federal research in air and soil pollution and to extend and speed up such research so that codes of standards may be drafted to protect the air and soil from pollution.

The committee recognized that we had no right to invade provincial boundaries and close factories that are polluting streams or the air and this force people out of work. We all know that provinces have laws and that municipalities have by-laws. Four years ago we saw an example where a factory was polluting animals and milk at Thorold, Ontario. In that case the province found authority to act. In each of the cases cited in this house, in each example given, it was the responsibility of the provincial governments to act.

What is to be done, Mr. Speaker? We recommended that the federal government provide research. That research is now well under way at Burlington. As I understand it, this is one of the most advanced projects of its kind in North America. Already it is yielding valuable results to the provincial government and to United States authorities.

We went further than that and recommended that the government, through that organization, prepare a code of standards which the provinces might be induced to adopt in order to bring uniformity in this field across Canada. If the mover of the motion and critics of the government who spoke subsequent to him had been serious in their criticisms they could have made sure that the suggestions they have been making today were included in the report of the committee. They could have made those suggestions at the time the committee members were sitting together drafting the report. Or they could have introduced a motion, which would have been on record, to show that they did not agree with the report of the committee.

The hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka asked today, "Are we going to wait for provincial governments to take joint action with us?". I say again that if the hon. member had wished us to rely on joint action that point of view could have been brought out in committee and suggested in the report. The report indicates no such thing. Moreover, I submit the report indicates that that concept