

*Water Resources Programs*

Canada any cleaning agent or water conditioner that contains any phosphates or any prescribed nutrients. It is our intention to word the bill in such a way as to ban completely the sale of such products containing phosphates; otherwise, we might find that there are large stocks on hand of such detergents, water conditioners or cleaners that contain phosphates that could be sold. We feel it is important that the large, monopolistic company that now handles phosphates for all detergent manufacturers in Canada, as well as the large detergent companies, the manufacturers, be prevented from going ahead and manufacturing great stocks of water conditioners and detergents that contain phosphates which could be unloaded on the Canadian public over an indeterminate period of years. We want to see that temptation removed once and for all.

Our amendments introducing new sub-clauses (b) and (c) are in line with the International Joint Commission report concerning the Great Lakes. That report states that unless the practice of putting phosphates into Erie is discontinued, that lake will be permanently ruined by 1972. It also states that 1975 is the absolute deadline for Lake Ontario. So, we think that our amendments are in line with the IJC committee report. Also, on behalf of this party, I have a bill on the Order Paper which seeks the complete banning of phosphate detergents by 1972. Our amendments, therefore, were brought into line with our thinking.

● (3:20 p.m.)

But I think that more important than either of these is the fact that our amendments are in line with public thinking across Canada. I would point out that when this bill was introduced to the House last November, no mention was made in it whatsoever of doing anything to curb or control nutrients. It was only after such organizations as Pollution Probe, SPEC and STOP became active and got the facts across to the Canadian people by publishing the phosphate content in detergents that the people of this country, and particularly the housewives, realized there was a great deal at stake in keeping the waterways of Canada clean. They realized that not only was the health of their families, and even the survival of their children and grandchildren at stake, but so was recreation, fishing and all the other purposes for which waterways are used. It was then that they realized also there was something very definite they could do. As hon. members opposite and members

[Mrs. MacInnis.]

on this side of the House know, letters, telegrams, petitions and protests of all sorts began to flood into the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.

What is interesting is that when this bill reached the committee stage the government itself took the initiative and introduced the amendment proposing to cut down the nutrient content of these products. I would like to make myself very clear on this point, because in my view it should be made abundantly clear that it was only following the intervention of organized and informed public opinion that a provision was placed in this bill to control and eventually eliminate phosphates in detergents in this country.

I should like to pay special tribute to organizations which gave leadership in Canada such as Pollution Probe, SPEC and STOP. Arguments have been brought out in the committee against the type of amendment we are proposing. We have been told that if phosphates are taken out of detergents, cleanliness in Canada will suffer and that only detergents with phosphates can produce the degree of cleanliness that is required in hospitals or even in homes in this country. I do not believe that is at all true; it is not in accord with the facts. A great many women have proven it not to be in accord with the facts because some of them have taken to using soap flakes and even to making their own soap in order to prove to themselves and the rest of the country that this is a possibility. Faced with the choice of having these perhaps more effective detergents or having soap flakes, faced with the choice of that or being accomplices to ruining and killing the lakes and waterways of this country, I am proud to say that the women of this country have overwhelmingly opted in favour of keeping the condition of our waterways and our environment from deteriorating.

There were other arguments advanced in the committee against the type of amendment we are proposing. We were told that the proposed substitutes for phosphates might themselves be equally or even more harmful. We were told that perhaps phosphates were not the culprits and were not the most damaging or dangerous nutrient, that in fact they might not be damaging or dangerous at all. I think, however, that the weight of the evidence that was brought before us is incontrovertible, that phosphates are damaging, that they have promoted the tremendous growth of algae which has killed fish and polluted the lakes and waterways wherever phosphates are