

Water Resources Programs

Mr. Speaker: Is it the wish of hon. members to call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**WATER RESOURCES****PROVISION FOR MANAGEMENT INCLUDING RESEARCH AND PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-144, to provide for the management of the water resources of Canada including research and the planning and implementation of programs relating to the conservation, development and utilization of water resources, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works, motion No. 7 (Mr. Comeau) and motion No. 14 (Mr. Harding).

Mr. Comeau: Mr. Speaker, immediately before five o'clock I had been speaking to my amendment which, in the first part, deals with the establishment of national quality standards for all classes of water and, in the second part, provides that no water will be allowed to fall below the set minimum standard. At that time I had been quoting what an hon. member had said in the committee.

Mr. Orange: At what page?

Mr. Comeau: I was quoting from page 64 of report No. 23 of the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works, dated April 28. The hon. member said he could not support the second part of the amendment because it would be detrimental to any person who, without intention, might pollute the waters of Canada. I said, and I repeat, what kind of argument is that? The hon. member was not really saying that this amendment would be detrimental to anybody who pollutes unintentionally; he was saying, "You can pollute as long as you do not mean it." That precisely touches on the point I have been trying to make and reinforces our argument that the bill will allow pollution to take place and that, therefore, we need standards

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. B  chard).]

so that industry, municipalities and all those concerned will know exactly what they are up against and what they must do in any anti-pollution measures they may implement. By setting standards for certain classes of waters we do not mean that we want the same standards to apply to all waters of Canada, only that the same standards shall apply to the same sorts of waters.

At page 27 of the fourth report of the standing committee the minister is reported as saying, in part:

—in location of plants, certainly of new plants, and in relocation where it is deemed in the corporate interest of the company, one of the factors they will consider is where their anti-pollution costs will be the cheapest. That is exactly what we want them to do, because that means they will then locate in the areas where the water is best able to rehabilitate their waste and that is the very place we want those plants. So I think it is a very important factor of the bill and one that we think is completely right.

I agree with that, Mr. Speaker, but those words do not defeat my argument that we should have national standards. Merely because the water of one area is cleaner than the water of another area, and because it may cost industry less in one area to prevent pollution than in another, does not mean that the waters involved should not be subject to standards. That is all we are saying. That argument has been advanced for many years. Those who say that it will cost less to fight pollution in some areas than in others, and therefore that they do not want the same standards applied to all waters, have misunderstood our meaning. We were referring to the quality of the water. We did not mean to imply that the same type of anti-pollution equipment should go into one plant as in another. We simply want the quality of a particular class of water to be maintained at a certain standard.

• (8:10 p.m.)

Water used for recreational purposes would have one standard. Another standard might have to be prescribed in connection with water used for industrial purposes. An industrial plant would presumably establish itself where anti-pollution costs were lowest, that is to say, where the water is cleanest. We hope, of course, that industrial plants will cease polluting our waters but we realize that in all cases this will not be possible, so some criteria, some control, will be necessary. We agree that it should not be concentrated in one area and that it should be permitted to become established across the country. If