

Northern Inland Waters Bill

Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. But I think it is important we should realize that the same questions are involved in this one.

• (4:20 p.m.)

The hon. member for Peace River did touch on a matter which I think is of some significance and that is the question of participation by the people living in the territory. This bill, as has almost any piece of legislation that has come before us dealing with the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, brings up the question and the right of the people to self-government. I must say in this connection that I agree with the position suggested by the hon. member for Peace River. I suppose one could welcome the fact that there is at least a gesture in the bill towards consultation with the council of the territories.

Mr. Chrétien: The board is to be located in the north.

Mr. Barnett: This is another gesture and none of us would quarrel with it. Quite properly, the board should function in the north and in each of the respective territories.

Before the bill goes much further I think the minister should consider whether it would not be wise to allow the council to pick one member, so that they may feel they have someone of their choice on the board. This would be a fairly modest proposal compared to some of the suggestions heard from the people in the north. As the bill is worded, the only requirement is that the commissioner, who is an appointee or agent of the minister, merely has to consult with the council about an appointment to this board.

If one reads some of the literature about the gradual involvement of the north, the Carrothers Commission report and so on, it seems to me that acceptance of the idea of at least one of those people being an appointee would not be going a bit beyond being realistic in meeting the desires for self-determination of the people of the north at this stage.

There are, of course, many aspects of this bill that one could seek to develop at this stage but I have attempted to touch on one or two that appeal to me as being of significance in the broad discussion. I have tried to relate my remarks to the question raised in the minister's speech and also in the speech of the hon. member for Peace River who preceded me. Having said that, I am prepared to resume my seat and let other members who wish to participate in the debate have their say.

[Mr. Barnett.]

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have examined Bill C-187 quite closely and I want to tell the minister that if I am being critical it is not a personal attack on him but rather because, as I shall point out, I feel that this bill is redundant. I have come to this conclusion as a result of the hearings before the committee, of which I am a member, studying the Canada Water Act.

I should like to begin my remarks by simply asking a question: what is going on with this problem of water management in Canada? We have the Canada Water Act, to which amendments have already been proposed, and we are assured that an Arctic pollution bill is coming up. Last week the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) proposed a clean air act. Then, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) speaks of amendments to the Fisheries Act and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) talks about a bill to control oil pollution. All these departments are talking about water and the pollution of it. We have the Agricultural Department banning pesticides in order to control our polluted waters and we are assured of legislation or regulations to ban phosphates. Now we have the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development getting into the act.

According to my research, Mr. Speaker, there are at least 15 departments or Crown agencies or research councils etc. concerned with water and the pollution of water. What is going on? There is no question in my mind that Bill C-187, an act respecting inland water resources in the two territories, is an anti-pollution bill. If it is and it deals with the waters of the territories, then I say it is a redundant bill because the Canada Water Act already covers the same ground. Section 9 of this bill provides for the conservation, development and utilization of the water resources in the north. The stated purpose of the Canada Water Act also provides for the conservation development and utilization of water resources of all of Canada. Section 9 of Bill C-187 and the title of Bill C-144 which reads, "An act 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", are identical and that is why I say the bill is redundant.

Does the Canada Water Act, Bill C-144, include all Canadian waters? Does it? Section 11 of the Canada Water Act to—