

continued. I hope that the minister, who has had previous experience with the Post Office Department, will very shortly rise in the House and make a statement of new government policy on this subject. I hope he will indicate that this discriminatory treatment in respect of some communities in Canada, including the city of Courtenay in my constituency, will be lifted so that they will have the same rights and privileges in the area of government services as their fellow Canadians in other communities.

**Mr. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech was a rather interesting document because, to my knowledge, it is the first time that a government has attempted to outline its philosophic approach to government problem-solving. Among the subjects with which the government dealt quite extensively was the matter of the environment in the 1970s, the matter of pollution. These are very important questions and I thought I would bring to the attention of the House a specific example of the impact of pollution on certain segments of the country, an impact which can be out of all proportion.

I want to deal with the mercury pollution situation which has been particularly prevalent in northwestern and other parts of Ontario, and Manitoba. It has hit those industries which are dependent upon fish. It is said in my constituency, which depends on the tourist industry, that the local fishermen may get 35 cents per pound of fish but that the tourist who comes up to fish pays as much as \$10 per pound of fish; yet the tourist industry provides about 10 per cent of the employment in my constituency.

Another group affected by mercury pollution is commercial fishermen. But perhaps the most important group and those who are most significantly affected by mercury pollution are the Indian people who live in areas in which mercury has destroyed their livelihood and, more important, has destroyed their way of life. No amount of compensation can provide adequate payment for what they have lost.

When we deal with pollution let me point out that there are all sorts of interpretations as to who is to blame. To some it is the company which pollutes, and to others it is the consumer who pollutes because he has been unwilling to pay the cost of the waste disposal of the process that brings to him a particular product. But let us look at the whole situation and find out who really is responsible for pollution. There are Crown corporations, as in Saskatchewan, and the private enterprise corporations; their shareholders, the management of the local mill, the workers who make the process work; and there are the service industries which are built around a particular centre of production, people such as small businessmen, school teachers and lawyers.

Another group is the consumers who, as I mentioned before, have had the benefit of low prices because they have not had to pay the cost of disposing the waste or the by-product of the products they purchase. Lastly, of course, and perhaps the greatest culprit of all, is government which represents the people, which taxes these

industries, which regulates these industries and prescribes anti-pollution measures for them. I think hon. members will see, therefore, that the people who are basically responsible for pollution are not a particular group, such as a company, its shareholders or the workers: society as a whole has utilized this method of increasing its gross national product, thereby creating an affluent society.

When mercury was discovered in my constituency it had an immediate effect on the tourist industry and on the commercial fishermen. With all respect to the federal government and the province of Ontario, one must say that they moved in very quickly to look after the commercial fishermen, a small industry which in the province of Ontario has an income of about \$6 million per year. But they ignored the tourist industry which has perhaps an annual income of around \$200 million and was dependent upon the same product as the commercial fishermen, that is, fish.

• (3:40 p.m.)

The areas most affected by mercury were the English River system, the Winnipeg River and Lake of the Woods. In the first two areas the government moved swiftly to provide compensation to the commercial fishermen affected. But at Lake of the Woods we have had another problem because the mercury levels were not considered high enough to close down the lake. The federal and provincial governments, along with their chosen instrument the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation, devised an arrangement whereby that corporation would buy all the fish produced from this lake and other lakes, test it for mercury, and that portion which was polluted would be destroyed.

The two governments agreed to compensate the board for the expense; the fishermen were not to take a loss. However, during the summer we had a great deal of difficulty because all the fish coming out of Lake of the Woods had to be frozen and later tested. At the end of the summer I went to Winnipeg to discuss the matter with the officials of the Department of Fisheries and Forestry. We came to an agreement whereby they would send a sampler to Kenora to take samples of fish, rush them to Winnipeg, make a test, and if the fish passed the test the catch could be sold as fresh fish. If there were some doubt, the fish would be frozen and tested again. The consequence of this was hopefully to put another \$25,000 in the pockets of the fishermen.

What did the provincial and federal governments do then, Mr. Speaker? It would be only reasonable to suggest that they would allow a system that had been in effect for the spring and summer to continue into the fall. But halfway through the fall fishing season the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation sent out a new price schedule, the effect of which was to penalize the fishermen on Lake of the Woods for mercury pollution, because instead of the government bearing the cost of the fish which were infected, the fishermen would have to bear the cost.

The result is that production of fish from Lake of the Woods has dropped by half, the fishermen's income has