

*Water Resources*

their lungs. This problem is affecting every urban area of this and other continents. How long do we have to wait for some type of leadership to be given by governments in regard to this problem? This government should be giving leadership.

● (8:30 p.m.)

I shall now deal with the problem of water pollution. This bill is supposed to deal with that problem. The problem of industrial wastes, sewage and phosphates lacks any action by the federal, provincial and municipal authorities. This fact is apparent everywhere we look. For example, action must be taken with regard to phosphates; the problem must be corrected now. The detergent manufacturing companies must be approached. New products must emerge from the research which I hope is being carried on and should be carried on with increasing tempo. Reports received by the various agencies indicate that we do not have much time in which to find a solution to this problem.

I wish to point out one or two examples of what is occurring through stupidity, not only the stupidity of this government but the stupidity of people in general who have ignored the problems of pollution. The Great Lakes system is the greatest body of fresh water in the world, yet we have almost completely destroyed it. We do not have to look very far from Ottawa to be aware of the pollution problems that exist. The problem is apparent in the Rideau River and the Gatineau River. It is disgraceful to have a river in the national capital area in such a condition. Nothing has been done to clear up these problems. In my home province of British Columbia there is the great Fraser River, one of the greatest salmon rivers on the North American continent. The lower reaches of this river are nothing but a running sewer. These are the problems that worry Canadians.

I now wish to deal with the Canada Water Act which is now before us and discuss several of its sections. I wish to point out to hon. members where in my opinion the act is weak, in the hope that amendments will be suggested when it gets to the committee stage. The bill we are now debating deals with only one aspect of pollution, namely, water pollution. This is normal; we do not expect everything to be covered under the one act. It is difficult to disagree with the bill, which in my opinion is scarcely more than a new administrative framework set up by the government in the hope that it will eventually solve the

grave pollution problems of this nation. No doubt it will provide better federal-provincial co-operation, and no one is opposed to this.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, is certainly not the tough, no-nonsense, no-deal legislation we expected for solving our water pollution problems. It is not the type of legislation the people of Canada were led to believe they would get in the Canada Water Act. This act must be a bitter disappointment to the Canadian people because it does nothing about pollution; it merely sets up another administrative framework to deal with our water pollution problems. As I said before, the bill sets no uniform Canadian standards, no regional standards and gives absolutely no leadership in this regard.

The bill will allow industry to pay for the right to pollute. I repeat, it will allow industry to pay for the right to pollute. This anaemic approach to our water pollution problems is being abandoned by those governments which have tried it. The bill places most of the onus for pollution control on the provinces and municipalities. There is only a vague, general outline of the federal government's position in dealing with the tremendous financial problem which will be caused by pollution control when it comes into effect. It is crystal clear from the bill and the minister's remarks this afternoon that the bulk of the cost will be borne by the provinces and municipalities. This fact alone is enough to severely restrict any major attack on pollution problems for years to come.

I now wish to go back and cover one or two points which I dealt with rather quickly. I wanted to make these points before my time expired. I indicated that I felt the act would be a bitter disappointment to the Canadian people because it does nothing about the problems of pollution; it merely sets up another administrative body. I now wish to state why we are apprehensive. This government has in the past had a bad record which leads me to believe that permissive and not direct legislation is just another stalling tactic. To date this government has had a poor showing in the pollution battle. As a result, Canadians everywhere are suffering from a reduction in the quality of their lives. I feel this permissive legislation is merely an appearance of action on the part of the government.

Time and again this government has had an opportunity to act on the problems of pollution, but it has failed the Canadian people. A number of acts already on our statute books