

*Fisheries Act*

this country, Ottawa has full authority over our sea coast and inland fisheries. Under the British North America Act, Ottawa makes our fishery laws and it approves our fishery regulations. True, Ottawa has delegated some of its authority to the provinces at times, but if these provinces want to make a change in any of their regulations they must first submit it to the federal government for approval.

Having said this, the Minister of Fisheries then got down to the nitty-gritty of our problem when he said, and again I am quoting:

We must deal with pollution before pollution occurs. We must get into the act before new plants are built; when they are in the design stage so to speak. We must insist on the best manufacturing techniques and the best devices for eliminating poisons and making sure that eutropication is a thing of the past. Our federal Fisheries Act, in other words must be updated. It must include a few clauses which are essentially anticipatory in nature. It must not only say what kind of chemicals can and which cannot be discharged into Canadian waters but see to it that our municipalities and our industries are aware of these guidelines ahead of time.

The minister continued as follows:

With a new and amended Fisheries Act, we will no longer have to wait until the damage is done to our environment. We will no longer have to discipline maverick companies which themselves have failed to look ahead and to plan for the future. We will no longer have to plead with municipalities to do the right thing for themselves and their citizens.

The minister said he liked this approach, and quite frankly so do I because it is simple and relatively straightforward. In his words, and I am now quoting him:

We already have a fisheries department and we already have a fisheries staff in the provinces. So, we can use our existing establishment to do a job on pollution—to do it quickly and to do it well.

In summing up, the Minister of Fisheries said:

In the Fisheries Act we have a one hundred year old piece of federal legislation which with a few simple improvements can be used to reduce pollution in all the waters of Canada. In our Department of Fisheries in Ottawa and out in our regional offices we already have all of the officers we need in order to police pollution in this country.

These statements made by the Minister of Fisheries are not broad generalities; they are blunt, they are definite and they are to the point. According to the Minister of Fisheries, the Fisheries Act, which we are presently amending, is all that is required to reduce, control and police pollution in all the waters of Canada. This is a viewpoint with which I

agree so I cannot help but ask, in view of these facts why was the authority to control pollution in Canada intentionally fragmented by this government? Why did this government intentionally go out of its way to set up an expensive bureaucracy for the control of water pollution, when the Fisheries department has all the officers required to police pollution? Why all these new and obviously unnecessary expenditures while the government implies it is practicing thrift and cutting down on expenses? This is nothing but doubletalk. Only last Friday in this House of Commons the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) asked the opposition for suggestions on how to cut down government expenditures. As you will recall, he received some suggestions immediately from the opposition. It was suggested that he cut down his personal staff, and it was suggested that he cut out Information Canada.

It is now obvious from the statements made by the Minister of Fisheries that we do not need the Canada Water Act, and its expensive bureaucratic water authority, or the Northern Inland Waters Act. The immediate withdrawal of these measures would not reduce by one iota our fight against pollution in this country. It would save some of the hard-earned dollars of the tax payers. I hope the government will give this suggestion some thought. I hope the government will give the Minister of Fisheries more power under this Fisheries Act so that our industries and our municipalities will know where they stand on this serious problem of pollution. We need guidelines under one department which are well understood and well administered. We need guidelines which are enforceable, and which are enforced from one end of Canada to the other, if we are to surmount this new difficulty which is troubling Canadians and all mankind. In my view the federal Minister of Fisheries should have complete responsibility for the enforcement of pollution control in Canada, using as a vehicle the federal Fisheries Act.

There are other provisions in the Fisheries Act amendments which relate to the conservation of marine plants. With the development of the science of marine biology, these plants are becoming more and more valuable commercially, and they provide an additional source of livelihood for many Canadians. I believe the changes proposed represent good conservation practice, and we are fully in agreement with these measures.