

*Proposed Committee on Pollution*

The Montreal city health department in a report signed by Jean Manier, head of the air pollution division, said on February 15 of this year as reported in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* that motor vehicle exhaust gases could, under certain weather conditions, cause the carbon monoxide intake of the average city driver to rise to serious levels. It has become necessary to consider in this country the installation of exhaust devices of the kind made compulsory in California. The time to do so is now, preparatory to introducing legislation accordingly.

Air pollution caused by dirt recently short-circuited two 120,000 volt power lines in Montreal and was blamed by Hydro-Quebec as the major cause of the electricity blackout in Montreal east last March. In this one instance alone, the old simplistic excuse that the smell of pollution is the smell of money has been discredited utterly. Industry was, in this instance, penalized directly and in a dramatic way. Industry was hit right in the pocketbook, and so were the people of Canada.

In my home province our citizens have been affected by pollution, some tragically. One group of farmers in Grand Forks had a bitter experience of soil pollution. A few years ago they were advised by the federal Department of Agriculture to apply dieldim to the land to cure a potato disease. The farmers followed this advice but were later told the department had decided that dieldim was injurious to health. It found traces of dieldim in the milk produced by the cows that ate the potatoes. It caused economic tragedy for those farmers, and no one can measure the effect it might have had on the people who consumed those products. I would like to see the government take action this session to compensate those who are affected economically by this particular type of soil pollution.

● (5:40 p.m.)

We can all agree that the devil of pollution exists. The question is how best can that devil be exorcised. Control of pollution, water and air pollution, is a matter which falls partially within the constitutional powers of the federal government and partially within the powers of the provinces and their subsidiaries, the municipalities. All levels of government are becoming more active in the field. The result has been much confusion and duplicated effort.

It is encouraging to see conferences of the kind held in Victoria last week when resource

[Mr. Perrault.]

ministers from all across Canada, provincial and federal, sat down together in a non-contentious, constructive conference to cope with the problems of pollution, unlike some conferences where there are differences of opinion and clashes of viewpoints. There is now concern at the federal, provincial and local levels of government that we must work together and achieve a workable framework within which pollution can be combatted.

I know there are other hon. members who wish to speak in this debate and so I shall keep my contribution short. I have here some of the background papers from the water workshop seminar held in Victoria at the beginning of last week. A very significant paper was presented to that conference by Dale Gibson, professor of the faculty of law at the University of Manitoba. His main thesis is that despite what people say about the constitution, that the constitution prevents the federal government from taking certain action and prevents the provincial governments from taking certain action to fight pollution, and thus the problems land between the two of them, he believes that the constitution presents no insuperable obstacles to the creation of a more satisfactory scheme of water management and the maintenance of purity in water. He concludes:

The administration of Canadian water resources will continue in the foreseeable future to involve a blend of federal and provincial activities, but there is no constitutional reason why it should continue to be hampered by the confusion and poor co-ordination that mark the present situation.

Excuses are no longer tolerable to the Canadian people. They know that if pollution is to be combatted we must have an adequate pollution control structure.

Local government is concerned about the disposal of garbage, sewage and industrial wastes and, in some cases, with the responsibility for the prevention of some forms of air pollution, usually smoke abatement. A recent survey by the Canadian Tax Foundation indicates that in general an appalling situation has been allowed to develop with regard to sewage treatment from coast to coast. A significant number of Canadians must still rely on septic tanks for sewage disposal, and too often the soil in which septic tanks are located is unsuitable for such installations. The survey also shows that most communities which have some form of treatment plant provide primary rather than secondary treatment. I find it intolerable that there should be any raw sewage whatsoever dumped in any