

Air Pollution

I think the hon. member for Parkdale deserves special commendation for the facts and figures he gave us to underline the urgency of this situation. It is easy to assume that the air is here for us to breathe and is here for all time; but mankind can spoil his future by not doing something to protect the purity of the air. I should like to say that if I have any criticism of the hon. member's bill it is that it seems to say in the words of a sage and historic document "Thou shalt not pollute the air". I agree, and I agree with all the other commandments too; but sometimes it is necessary to go a little further than just laying down the law that such and such shall not be done.

If we are to solve this problem, is it not a fact that we must cope with the causes of it? The hon. member made it quite clear that most of our pollution comes from gasoline and other fuel-driven vehicles. I know it would take a tremendous revolution, a lot of thinking and a tremendous economic upheaval for us to talk about replacing the gasoline-driven motor vehicle with something else, but it may well be that if we are to maintain life on this planet this is precisely what we will have to do. Obviously, I am not against automobiles, but we may well have to develop and manufacture a different kind from those we have today.

I should like to see the hon. member and others in this house who are concerned about the problem of pollution put pressure on the government, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer), the minister responsible for the National Research Council and others so that if necessary money in large quantities might be made available for the discovery and development of other ways to provide transportation. When I was a child there were electric automobiles around. They went out of style because they were not fast enough. Surely, however, with all the inventive capacity of mankind today we could produce a storage battery of some kind that would provide the necessary speed and power so that we could have transportation without the pollution of air which comes from gasoline-driven vehicles. Perhaps with a little imagination or encouragement our scientists could produce some sort of a central broadcasting station which would send out power which vehicles could get by tuning in; in other words, they could get their power by remote control.

When one thinks of what is going on up in the heavens or out in the heavens, wherever

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

the Appollo IX astronauts are today, in terms of space travel which is controlled hundreds of miles away from Houston and other places on this continent, surely it is not a wild dream or just science fiction to think of a day when the vehicles that we get around in will be driven in some such way as this. There may be still other ways. Someone may have more imagination than I; but surely one of these two courses is open to us, either the development of some kind of storage battery that will provide the power we need or the development of remote control power that would be available to vehicles. There probably are other ways to deal with this. The Minister of Transport said that when he has solved the housing problems of the country, he will be concerned about our urban and transportation problems.

These problems are very real and very urgent. I hope that not only will the committee study them but that the government itself will realize that this is an area which calls for leadership, research and responsibility. Again, I congratulate the hon. member for bringing in this bill and for trying to impress upon the house the urgency of the situation. It is terribly urgent. We do not have a great deal of time in which to deal with it. I hope we will realize it is not good enough just to say "thou shalt not pollute the air" but that we must develop other means of transportation than we rely on today if we are to obey that commandment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. C. A. Gauthier: Mr. Chairman, I shall be brief because I do not want to be accused of talking out the bill. In fact, I am sorry that similar legislative proposals are often talked out.

I congratulate the hon. member who introduced this measure for which we have long been waiting. I feel sure that the Canadian people want this bill to be considered. And, in order to make our work more efficient, I suggest that we unanimously recommend that the bill be referred to the committee on health, welfare and social affairs, so that we may one day be adequately protected against air pollution.

The sponsor of this bill said enough earlier to convince us of the necessity of such a measure and it is useless for me to add anything else. Besides, I am under the impression that another hon. member has something to say and I would not want to prevent him from doing so. I should simply like to say how glad we are that this bill has been introduced, and we strongly hope, as the hon.