

Adjournment Debate

Union as a signatory to various international agreements on human rights, including the Helsinki Final Act. The Government has also sought to reflect democratic values of the Canadian people. It is for this reason that Canada considers respect for human rights as an important factor in our relations with the Soviet Union.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs raised the issue of Soviet Jewry during his meetings with Soviet leaders. He informed them of the importance Canadians attach to the respective human rights. He urged the Soviet authorities to allow the emigration of Soviet Jews. He stressed, in particular, Canada's hope for the release of Anatoly Shcharansky, and he raised the case of Mr. Sakharov as well.

This Government will follow up by promoting respect for human rights already guaranteed in international instruments bilaterally with the Soviet Union and other countries, and multilaterally through the United Nations and the Helsinki process, notably at the meeting of CSCE Experts on Human Rights, now taking place in Ottawa, the first CSCE meeting to take place outside Europe and the first devoted to human rights.

HEALTH—TESTING OF TOXIC HORMONE TO CONTROL COCKROACHES

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, on April 19, I directed a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) in connection with what steps the Department was taking to test a low toxic hormone called hydroprene, which is being used very effectively in the United States for the control of cockroaches. At that time the Minister indicated he was aware of the fact that the Department was testing hydroprene, but he had no up-to-date information as to when those tests would be completed or when it was likely that hydroprene would be accepted for sale in Canada.

• (1810)

This particular subject, while it may appear somewhat peculiar and unusual to be debated in the House of Commons, is certainly a subject that is of high interest to the people of this country, particularly to apartment dwellers. Anyone who has served on a municipal council is well aware of the problem that roaches cause for the people who live in apartment buildings. In the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, where I am from, approximately 50 per cent of the people who reside in the city live in apartments. In my constituency, something in the neighbourhood of 61 per cent of the people live in apartment buildings. This subject is of particular concern to apartment dwellers.

The problem is that cockroaches are great disease carriers and a health hazard to all Canadians, in fact, to all people around the world. Roaches are terrific breeders. One female roach produces something like 500 eggs in the space of one year and, therefore, multiplies exceedingly quickly. This means that these little bugs are carrying a great many diseases to all of us. It does not matter whether or not we are good housekeepers, they are transmitted very easily.

In Metropolitan Toronto it is claimed that most cockroaches are transmitted by people riding the transportation system. If you sit on a bus or subway train, you may well come in contact with an insect of this variety. It attaches to the clothing, you carry it home and infect the entire household.

This sort of problem is particularly acute in apartments where there are so many people and so many units. This kind of insect is transmitted very easily through all of the cracks and crannies that develop in an apartment building, or any residence for that matter. In the past and at the present time we have tried to control this by the use of pesticides.

I was interested to hear the discussion in Private Members' hour relating to pesticides and the problems in testing them. The two pesticides that have been used extensively in controlling cockroaches is dursban and diazinon. Both are used extensively in spraying to kill roaches, but unfortunately the roaches have become immune to this kind of spraying. They seem to thrive on it, whereas it has had effects on human beings. Another method that is used, because they come through cracks and nooks and crannies, is caulking materials and the use of fossilized shavings in order to block the cracks to prevent their transmission.

All of these things having been said, nothing seems to be working. The problem becomes more and more acute all the time. It is wonderful to learn that in the United States there is a hormone, hydroprene, that is being used, not as a killer, but as a method of birth control for the male cockroach. It has the effect of very substantially reducing the number of fertilized eggs that are laid by any female cockroach. In that respect, it controls the population and should be a very effective method in solving this problem, not only in the United States but in Canada as well.

The people of this country, particularly apartment dwellers, are looking forward to the introduction of hydroprene on the Canadian market. So far, I understand it is still being tested by the Department of National Health and Welfare, and we look forward to the completion of those tests. I hope that the Parliamentary Secretary will be able to tell us today when we can expect those tests to be completed so that the people of Canada as well as the people of the United States will have the benefit of the use of this hormone in controlling this very, very terrible pest that has been plaguing us for so many years.

• (1815)

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want to respond to the Hon. Member for York East (Mr. Redway), but I do so with some trepidation—treading where angels fear to rush in.

If I could respond to the Hon. Member, let me advise him that National Health and Welfare does not in fact carry out the mandatory safety tests in order for pesticides to be registered in Canada under the federal Pest Control Products Act. Notwithstanding that, upon request by Agriculture Canada, the Department had for many years evaluated the potential health hazards of pesticides based on results of safety tests carried out by the manufacturer. These mandatory safety tests