

*Canadian Environmental Protection Act*

to use them where there is a need, because environmental protection is that important.

The ultimate importance of attaching criminal sanctions to such destruction is that we can say to people, "You are a criminal if you violate this law". It will not be as if they have broken just an administrative law, but they will become enemies of society. It is like saying, "We give you the ultimate in our disapproval in establishing criminal sanctions". Canadians have reached that stage. They have seen that other measures have not been adequate to do the job. Canadians demand criminal penalties and they want stronger enforcement. They want to reverse the trends of slack enforcement. Canadians believe that too many mistakes have been made already and that we have to start to undo those mistakes and the damage they have caused. We must set up mechanisms to ensure that those mistakes do not continue to be made. Canadians want action and leadership from the Government. I will not refuse a one-quarter, one-half or one-sixteenth measure, the kind that we have before us in Bill C-74 today.

In conclusion, I want to assure Hon. Members that my Party and I will continue to work very hard for stronger, better and more effective environmental protection so that Canadians will have a truly safe and healthy environment in which to live and work.

**Mr. Alan Redway (York East):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity this morning to say a few words in support of Bill C-74, a Bill which is entitled an Act respecting the protection of the environment and of human life and health. This Bill is commonly known as the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. I am pleased that there is a Bill of this nature before us at long last.

As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, the Government has taken very strong action to put together this legislation. Back in December of last year it issued a draft Bill for discussion purposes. At that time the Minister stated that he would be introducing a specific Bill on this subject in the spring of this year.

● (1150)

I waited patiently, and you may remember, Mr. Speaker, that on June 23 I rose in the House and asked the Minister what was happening to the Bill, since two days before, spring had passed into summer. Well, I am very pleased that here we are in September, not quite into fall but getting close to it, and finally we are dealing with second reading of the Bill. I hope today it will be moved to committee stage in order that it can be in place before much longer has passed.

I listened with interest to the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) when she referred to the Bill from the point of view of the New Democratic Party. Yesterday I listened to the comments of the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) from the point of view of the Liberal Party. Quite understandably, as you as and I, and all members of the public can realize, their job is to point out some of their

concerns with the legislation. It is quite normal for them to raise areas of concern. Personally, I am looking forward to the opportunity to deal in detail with those areas of concern in committee. Today my purpose is to deal with another aspect of the Bill, so I will not be specifically dealing with all those concerns.

I do wish to comment on one concern raised by the Hon. Member for Broadview—Greenwood. The Hon. Member pointed out concerns about a citizens' environmental bill of rights. She also pointed out that in the whole area of the environment there is a constitutional problem. Unfortunately, in her remarks she did not link the two. She pointed out that there is a constitutional problem, but did not link that with the problem of attempting to put together a Canadian citizens' environmental bill of rights. That is one of the serious difficulties in trying to do that.

The other question raised by the Hon. Member dealt with the rights of citizens to take action to protect the environment, apart from government action or from criminal action. The Criminal Code as you know, Mr. Speaker, is the underpinning of the rights of the federal Government to deal with environmental matters.

I had hoped that the Hon. Member would point out that this legislation does have some provisions in it to deal with that concern, including the right of any 12 persons to petition the Minister to investigate an alleged violation, and that the Minister must respond with his findings. There is also the right to petition the Minister to have a substance included on the priority substance list, and that the Minister must respond with this decision. There is a right of a person to appeal the decision not to regulate a substance as toxic. That appeal must be considered by a board of review.

Although there may not be all of the provisions and the rights for the ordinary citizen that the Hon. Member would wish, there are a good many not included previously that have been included in this legislation by the Minister and the Government.

Yesterday I listened with interest to the Parliamentary Secretary outlining all the benefits and features of this legislation. Of course, that is of great significance. But you, Mr. Speaker, the official critic for the Liberal Party, the official critic for the New Democratic Party, myself, all Canadians, and all Members of the House know that you do not get effective legislation and protection unless there is enforcement. The manner in which environmental protection legislation of any type has been enforced by any government, whether provincial or federal, has been of great concern to Canadians.

In the past there has been a concern that perhaps the regulatory bodies, the enforcement bodies, have been in bed with the polluters. The time has come to make a clear distinction and get on with the proposed Act, and the question of strictly enforcing this legislation in order to ensure that Canadians are truly protected.