

*Request for Environmental Council*

countries of the world. It is estimated that within the next 30 years the world population could double, and instead of 3.6 billion people on this earth we would then have roughly seven billion people. This means more industry, more resource use, more pollution. The strain on our environment and resources will be immense. It appears doubtful, with this staggering increase in population facing us whether we could ever appreciably increase the standard of living of those people now living in many of the underdeveloped countries in the world.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, every country in the world, including our own, should develop a population policy. I feel Canada should initiate, through the United Nations, international conferences to promote the stabilization of the earth's population. Canada's own population must eventually be stabilized based on the carrying capacity of our environment. Investigations in relation to our per capita needs for all resources should be commenced without delay. I might add that major research on all human settlement problems is also needed immediately. This includes, of course, the increasing number of problems which we are meeting in our rapidly growing urban centres, which currently are the source of most of our severe environmental problems. Long range planning and action on these urban matters cannot be long delayed. There are many other aspects of population growth, but time does not permit me to deal too extensively with them.

Our motion indicates, Mr. Speaker, that our party is interested in the setting of national standards for environmental quality of air, water and land. These standards must be based on the biology of the receiving environment, and not on the purely arbitrary limits of what is technologically possible. If the ecological balance of natural populations or organisms is substantially altered by current technology, then I feel the offending process must be prohibited. National standards must be enforced by the federal authorities and adequate penalties must be set up to ensure compliance with the law. The setting of national standards will force a major clean-up of pollution problems throughout the nation. There is no doubt it will be costly, and for this reason the federal government should be prepared to provide vast sums of money for the over-all clean-up which must come. Low cost loans must be available to all municipalities and to some industries so that they can get on with the job of sewage treatment plants and plant clean-up without any further delay.

A pollution control fund should be established to help tackle some of the most serious and pressing problems facing us. In this category would come the clean-up of the Great Lakes system and other pollution problems which have arisen mainly due to a lack of knowledge and research over the years. The costs of pollution control, however, must be met primarily by the offending party. In some cases subsidies might be necessary, but if so the cost must be made public so the true cost of technology may be assessed. Those who break pollution laws must be liable for the full cost of clean-up, and governments should take steps to ensure that non-recyclable, throw-away consumer products should eventually be phased out by law.

Our party has spoken out on numerous occasions urging the establishment of an Environmental Council of

[Mr. Harding.]

Canada. The function of the council would be to report on environmental affairs and to give guidance to both the government and the general public on all environmental problems. It would be a non-political organization, with adequate facilities to do a thorough job in the whole field of the environment. The establishment of such a council is long overdue and would be welcomed by Canadians generally.

I indicated earlier that our group is not impressed with the record of this government's attempt to deal with our environmental problems in general. It has been a piecemeal approach at best. A number of departments still jealously guard the right to establish regulations and to dictate policy regardless of the consequences. These ministers cannot do a proper job of protecting our environment if they are constantly in conflict with the commercial and economic aspects of their own departments.

For this reason one over-all Department of the Environment should have been established and should not have been placed in conflict with any economic activity coming under its direct jurisdiction. This is one of the weaknesses of the present Department of the Environment; it has fisheries and forestry under its control. Conflicts of interest do arise. It does not control the whole field of environmental problems and for this reason will often be ineffective in solving pollution problems.

Already in this House we find that we cannot obtain full information from the various ministers on certain important environmental developments. For example, let us look at a major problem in the environmental field in Canada today. I refer to the TAPS versus the Mackenzie River pipeline routes. The public is being kept in the dark. Here we find that several departments are involved, yet no clear-cut policy or clear-cut statement has been made on the floor of this House as to what is going on in relation to the pipeline or as to what Canadians can expect to come out of it.

• (1510)

Only yesterday, a report indicated that the Americans had released a very voluminous survey which had been made of the TAPS pipeline and the Mackenzie River route. Apparently the United States has far more information, as do the general public in that country, than we in Canada. I think we in Canada are entitled to know just what is going on. What discussions are taking place? What discussions have taken place? If it is envisaged that a pipeline will come down the Mackenzie River corridor, Canadians should know. Is the pipeline being discussed in terms of a common carrier? Who will set the route? Who is going to own the pipeline? What will be the starting point of this pipeline and, when additional finds of oil are made in the Canadian north, will there be room in the pipeline to bring these resources down to the Canadian market? Some members opposite indicate that they have this knowledge. It is not general knowledge throughout Canada, and it is certainly not within the general knowledge of the members of this House.

We are interested in finding out how this pipeline will affect the natives in the north. What plans have been made to make certain that the livelihood of these people, which will be affected by any construction of this type,