

objectives and guidelines, but standards. What we want is something that will assure Canadians that the environment is going to be protected. It is their environment. The environment is not something that is simply "out there". The environment is the space in which we live, and we need to protect it. It is not good enough to simply have guidelines. This Government brought down conflict of interest guidelines, and we had example after example of Ministers violating those guidelines and then simply shrugging their shoulders and saying: "It is only a guideline".

We are afraid that the same sort of thing is going to happen if all we have are environmental guidelines. What we want are standards, and standards that can be enforced, and this very weak-kneed Bill does not provide us with such standards.

The proposed Canadian Environmental Protection Act would give the Government some desirable powers, including the power to identify toxic substances, and the power to regulate such toxic substances as it identifies. As well, it gives the Government the ability to screen new substances before they are used in the environment. It gives to Canadians the right to complain to the Government when substances have not been identified or regulated to their satisfaction; it allows the Government to ban the export of toxic substances whose use is banned in Canada, and to restrict the export of toxic substances whose use is restricted in Canada. It gives the Government the right to regulate, on the basis of environmental quality, the use of fuels; it gives the Government the regulatory authority over nutrients in water conditioners; it legislates federal authority over environmental matters with respect to federal lands and undertakings. It legislates governmental authority to bring down environmental regulations with respect to federal Departments and Crown agencies.

One very important provision of Bill C-74 is that it would protect "whistleblowers" who report on breaches of Government environmental regulations. As well, it gives the federal Government the authority to protect citizens of foreign countries from air pollution of Canadian origin. In addition, it would establish boards of review, to be created on petition of individuals who are unhappy with the enforcement of the regulations under the Act. In addition to all of the foregoing, it provides for fines up to \$1 million for environmental offences, which is more significant than fines have been in the past.

While the powers to be given to the Government under this legislation are desirable, the Bill itself, when one looks at what it does not do with respect to the environment, falls far short of its pretentious title, and falls far short of what is needed to protect the Canadian environment. For example, it does not deal with pesticides. No matter how toxic, pesticides will be regulated by the Department of Agriculture. Bill C-74 specifically excludes substances which are regulated under other Acts of Parliament.

Bill C-74 does not set down any standards for environmental quality. Rather, it has guidelines; it has objectives. It does not have standards. In short, Bill C-74 does not change the kind of

perverted logic we have been operating under in terms of the protection of the environment, that being that a substance has to be proved harmful before it can be regulated. Again, we have the example of the pulp mill workers, who are, in effect, human guinea pigs in terms of the harmful effects of TCMTB. Until that substance can be proved to be harmful to human health, it will continue to be used in pulp mill operations. Its use will continue to be acceptable under both the federal regulations and the applicable regulations of the Province of British Columbia.

Before new chemicals are introduced into the environment, there should be some assurance that they are safe. Bill C-74 does not have incorporated in it an environmental bill of rights, a bill of rights that would give Canadians the right, by law, to a healthy environment. It does not do anything for the major issues that I mentioned earlier, such as acid rain and the over-use of pesticides. Finally, when we look at what the Bill is attempting to do, regulating the introduction of toxic substances into the environment, it still uses an outdated and outmoded method of regulation. It still uses a substance-by-substance approach. It is still based on trying to manage toxic chemicals rather than seeking to reduce them.

● (1600)

It has been estimated that there are some 60,000 industrial chemicals in use in North America today. Ross Hume Hall in an essay in *Probe Post* in the spring of last year pointed out:

According to a report of the National Academy of Sciences, in the U.S., the number of chemicals in industrial use today for which there is a complete spectrum of toxic effects is zero.

In other words, we do not know how many of these really affect us in a toxic way. He goes on to say:

Of the 60,000 industrial chemicals, 50,000 have never been tested for any toxicological effects whatsoever. For the other 10,000 chemicals, information is scanty.

Of course when we are talking about chemicals such as this, we are not talking about chemicals in isolation from one another, we are talking about chemicals that enter into all kinds of weird and strange combinations that are completely uncontrolled by the people who sometimes release them into the environment and completely unforeseen by the people who claim to be regulating these releases in the interests of a clean and protected environment. Mr. Hall points out that Bill C-74 continues to use the old approach of substance by substance identification rather than taking a more sweeping and comprehensive approach. He points out from 1976 to 1986, a period of 10 years:

—the Contaminants Control Branch had completed regulations for five chemicals—three of them (including PCBs) no longer manufactured. Five chemicals assessed in 10 years.

We are talking about a total of 60,000 industrial chemicals in use. We have continued that substance by substance approach in the legislation we are dealing with today. In fact, the procedure is dragged out even more. A chemical that is determined to be a toxic threat is now put on a Schedule 4 list