

*Water Resources*

Many issues were discussed at the recent session of the United Nations in New York. Almost all the debates were featured by disagreements in respect of different ideologies. This is characteristic of debates at the United Nations and in this Parliament, and there is nothing unhealthy about it. Significantly, on perhaps one of the rare occasions in the history of an international assembly of nations—capitalists, communists, yellow, white, black and brown races—all were thoroughly aware of the threat which hangs over the world. There are few illusions left about the future of mankind unless we protect the environment. The feeling of all nations is that during the generation of which we are a part, planet earth could be converted into a tragic graveyard unless we get together on the problem of pollution.

We may succeed in solving the Middle East crisis and the hundreds of disputes, large and small, which threaten nuclear war; but beyond that lies the very challenge of survival. I should like to quote to members of the House part of a report which was prepared by world scientists and made available through the Secretary General's office at the last session of the United Nations. This is the kind of report which has seriously disturbed not only the United States, Canada and South America, but Soviet Russia, South Africa and all black and white nations throughout the world. In this work entitled "Problems of the Human Environment" the Secretary General—and he is not given to overstatement—said this:

● (8:30 p.m.)

—for the first time in the history of mankind, there is arising a crisis of world-wide proportions involving developed and developing countries alike, the crisis of the human environment.

He continued:

It is becoming apparent that if current trends continue, the future of life on earth could be endangered. It is urgent, therefore, to focus world attention on those problems which threaten humanity in an environment that permits the realization of the highest human aspirations, and on the action necessary to deal with them.

He then said:

The need to provide food, water, minerals, fuel and other necessities for such increasing numbers of people will place pressures upon virtually all areas of the earth and demand the most careful planning and management of natural resources. No nation can any longer be isolated from these global pressures. It has become clear that we all live in one biosphere within which space and resources, though vast, are limited.

Some people may say these are just words and that the Secretary General himself is given to overstatement. But let us not exclude scientific evidence about the possibility of the world running out of oxygen, and the possibility that in 40 years' time we may not be able to breathe. I quote directly from the United Nations report:

Some agricultural chemicals have side effects on the environment that we are now only beginning to comprehend. Thus, the maintenance of both atmospheric oxygen and the productivity of marine environments depends upon photosynthesis by marine plants, mostly the floating algae of microscopic size. Minute amounts of such pesticides as DDT have been found to inhibit photosynthesis in these algae by 75 per cent.

These are the algae which produce the oxygen for the people of the world to breathe. The report continues:

Nevertheless, we have dumped an estimated billion pounds of DDT into our environment and are adding an estimated 100 million pounds per year.

This DDT has found its way into the waters of the earth, some of it from Canadian rivers which drain into the oceans.

The total world production of pesticides is estimated at over 1,300 million pounds annually. The United States of America alone exports over 400 million pounds per year.

Based on the scientific evidence produced by scientists, if anything, the danger to our environment from pollution has been understated. This is relevant to what my friend from Newfoundland said about air pollution. The scientists of the United Nations tabled this evidence during the discussions of the General Assembly at the 23rd session. I read from the report at page 5:

—the reliance of modern technology upon the combustion of fossil fuels has brought a 10 per cent increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide over the past century. With increased rates of combustion, this could rise to 25 per cent by the year 2000 A.D. The consequence of such an increase upon world weather and climate are uncertain, but could eventually be catastrophic.

This report was not prepared by the National Liberal Federation, by the Conservative Party or by any other party; it was produced by the scientists of the world who in the gravest possible terms say that we are in danger of ending life in the biosphere unless we end pollution.

The increased use of modern technology has brought major increases in the amount of waste products which serve as environmental pollutants. It has been stated that in the United States of America alone, this amounts each year to 142 million tons of smoke and noxious fumes, 7 million automobiles, 20 million tons of paper, 48,000 million