

Pest Control Products Act

the act. They should be involved in the decision-making process by which chemicals are registered.

Of course, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) claims his department has a good working relationship with the Department of National Health and Welfare, that the departments do consult with each other and that his department does take the advice of the health department. But that relationship has not always worked.

When it came to the chemical called captan, one of the chemicals tested by the IBT labs and later the test was found to be faulty, the Department of National Health and Welfare recommended that the chemicals should not be used. The Department of Agriculture chose not to follow that advice. In fact, it has now set up its own little group to study this chemical. When it comes to the crunch the Department of National Health and Welfare takes a back seat, indeed, in the decision-making process.

We in this party will continue to press for a responsible attitude by governments to new chemicals that come on to the market. We feel it is not just up to the Department of Agriculture to determine which products should be placed on the market and which products should not. The health of Canadians, both consumers and producers, is at stake here, as is the health of our environment. In that decision-making process we maintain that those other guardians of the public interest, the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of the Environment, should also be involved.

The matter of the Constitution was raised just a few moments ago by a previous speaker. Personally it is one of my regrets that in the constitutional process responsibility for the environment and, therefore, responsibility for future generations who must inherit our earth, was not discussed. All too often the responsibility falls between different departments and different levels of government, so in fact what we have is a collective system of irresponsibility.

While our clean air, clean water and clean earth are being consumed by one generation, no one is around to protect the rights of future generations who must live with the mess we are leaving behind for them. I personally hoped that at some stage during the constitutional debates this particular question could have been raised. Some agreement could have been reached among the various levels of government to take on the collective responsibility for the health of our environment, in order to ensure that future generations will have something to inherit. Unfortunately this did not occur, but it is not too late. I urge the government, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin), and the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts) to allow a parliamentary special task force to convene and to discuss in depth all the ramifications of chemical use in our society and in our way of life.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill C-87, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act, without amendment.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT**MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Whelan that Bill C-45, to amend the Pest Control Products Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, this is a very short bill but, in my view, a very important bill. It deals with poisons that can kill human beings, wildlife, and even the earth by stopping it from producing. I do not think we should be in a rush to pass it without adequate debate.

Poisons are always dangerous. The act has been administered with some indifference and, in some cases, with arrogance. It is high time we as Canadians started to take more care with regard to the administration of acts such as this.

This simple amendment is important, and I commend the government for bringing it in. This bill requires more than one amendment. There are many things, some of which have already been mentioned, that are crying for attention, and I have in mind pesticides, herbicides and other toxic materials. As members of this House we have a very definite responsibility in dealing with these matters. We should give them the importance they really deserve.

In relation to the testing of these poisons, I am not at all satisfied that Canadians should be accepting tests carried out in other countries, simply putting the stamp of approval on the substances and using them in this country, because those pesticides, herbicides and toxic materials can mean suffering and sometimes the death of human beings, suffering and sometimes the death of animals, fish and wildlife, and the death of our producing land.

When one of the early explorers saw the prairies which have since become Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta he wrote to the head of his company and said: "This land is a wilderness, it is only good for buffalo; there is no value to it whatsoever". I want to suggest that he missed one great fact, that this land contains two, six or eight inches of black soil. Often today we do not place sufficient value on that black dirt. It is what produces our food. That is what gives us bountiful harvests, along with the sun and the rain and the bountiful will of God. Without that black dirt we would not have the