

*Environmental Contamination*

this bill and support in particular the fundamental principles of this bill.

It is not my intention at this point in time to actually discuss the details. However, I do wish to indicate I feel there are special features, some of which have been alluded to by others, which will require careful scrutiny by the standing committee. It is my intention to deal with some of these details when the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry. At the outset of my comments I intentionally read the title of the bill and shall repeat it again. It is entitled, "An act to protect human health and the environment from the release of substances that contaminate the environment".

In my view this contains three important words. I believe they are the crux of the bill and the crux of the problem. Those three words are, "human", "health" and "environment". It is to this area I wish to direct my remarks. When I first read this bill I vividly recalled an examination I had many years ago during my early years of training. At that particular time I was asked to describe the importance of a substance called adenosine triphosphate and the role it played in the normal functioning of the human body. So I proceeded to describe it in terms of its cycle and muscle metabolism, and quite frankly I felt rather satisfied that I had given a satisfactory answer. I have no intention of discussing the biology and physiology of adenosine triphosphate, but the response of the examiner at that time is germane to this debate and to the legislation before us. Because the response I received to my answer was that I had picked one tree out of the forest. I cannot think of a better analogy for the bill that is presently before us. The minister has introduced a bill discussing human health and environment which is limited by clause 2, which is entitled "interpretation," to one principal area which is defined by the words "substance" and "release". Surely in the context of total environmental health we are indeed out of context and are picking one tree out of the forest by limiting ourselves to that extent.

Before I proceed let me place this bill in the proper context. If I may I should like to quote from the bill with specific reference to the words "release" and "substance". These appear at page two of the bill under the interpretation section. I quote:

"substance" means any distinguishable kind of inanimate matter capable of being dispersed in the environment or a precursor of any such matter.

I wish to compliment the minister for talking at the outset of his remarks about prevention rather than cure, a most important concept to which I shall allude at some further point.

As I analyze this bill, I interpret it as a fragmented approach to the problems of human health and the environment. I really believe it is an example of the lack of comprehension the minister has for the total area of the problems of human health and the environment. I also believe it indicates a lack of liaison between the Department of the Environment and many other important agencies. What is more important, and what I feel is more tragic, is that it clearly demonstrates there is no over-all government policy dealing with the broad spectrum of the problems we see in terms of human health and the environment.

[Mr. Holmes.]

During the debate on the Speech from the Throne earlier this year I analyzed the health care system in Canada and outlined at that time an action-oriented program dealing with the health problems of Canadians, and more specifically with the environmental health component which I felt was important in approaching the over-all concept of the health of Canadians. I may say also that at that time the Department of National Health and Welfare was sufficiently interested in my comments that they asked for a copy of the document, which I gladly provided.

I suggest that the minister might obtain a copy of that document from his colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) and review in particular the special area of environmental health, which I think would be most informative for him. Perhaps he has read it, and if so it may have prompted the legislation we have before us. I hope that after he has reviewed it, and the Minister of National Health and Welfare has as well, they may see fit to implement some of the additional proposals discussed in the document.

With regard to that document, I have no hesitation in transmitting it to the department in the hope of course they might establish new health priorities and that we might see some action in many of the health care areas, including environmental health to which I have alluded. It is interesting that rather recently I asked for a similar document in the form of a press release from the Department of National Health and Welfare dated March 25, 1974. I wish to quote a little from this release:

A separate Yukon Region of Northern Medical Services with headquarters at Whitehorse, the territorial capital, as of 1st April 1974, was announced today by Health and Welfare Minister Marc Lalonde.

Further in the release we find this:

The Minister's decision is based on the recommendations of a Medical Services Branch task force under the chairmanship of Dr. Lyall Black, Director General, Program Management. It was charged with examining the feasibility of raising the Branch's Yukon Zone to regional status.

Among the findings on which the task force based its recommendations were:

1. Northern Region which covers a vast area had encountered serious management problems due in large part to its very size.
2. The Yukon had good internal communications including transportation and well-developed health services suited to regionalization at minimum cost.
3. Establishment of the Yukon Region would enable the Northern Region to concentrate its efforts in the Northwest Territories which has a rapidly expanding population and because of its huge area more difficult problems of organization and health delivery operations.

It seemed to me that in performing our function as a constructive opposition such a document as I suggested, which had been prepared by Dr. Lyall Black, should be tabled. I made this request before the standing committee and I was quite upset and annoyed when the ruling of the chairman indicated it would be impossible to have such a document tabled. This was because it was considered to be an internal document and therefore confidential.

● (1720)

If you attempt to analyze the health care field with the usual traditional models, Mr. Speaker, you realize very quickly that it is fragmented, very complex, diverse and subject to many special interest groups. It is this type of