

extrasensory perception? Are they to rely on little birds flitting around or alighting on their shoulders—

**An hon. Member:** If they don't die.

**Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain):** —if they don't die, to be sure—and whispering in the ear, “Madam Minister,” or “Mr. Minister, there is something here which you should look at, something which looks suspicious, to correct which you will need to invoke the provisions of the act”? In the absence of ESP and little birds fluttering around and settling on ministers' shoulders, how will the ministers know about dangers arising in this country which require the bringing into force of the act? There is no other way that this bill, the nature of which we applaud, can come into effect.

● (1510)

**An hon. Member:** Unless we have a disaster.

**Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain):** That is the other point, the one we have to avoid—unless we have a disaster. The very real danger with this bill, which poses as reform, is that we will only be able to make use of it when it is too late. In other words this bill would only be used as a curative and not as a preventive measure. That not only offends the requirements of Canada to have legislation that is preventive, but it also offends and rebuts the very basis upon which this bill is introduced in the House.

We have been told that the bill is a preventive measure. However, there is no way by which we can be assured that the prevention will in fact occur, or that it will be anything other than a band-aid cure after a disaster has occurred. It may be that with good luck on some occasions either the Minister of the Environment or the Minister of National Health and Welfare will have enough information in advance to cause the mechanism in this bill to move into action. That may happen from time to time, but surely we cannot accept as satisfactory a bill that may only work occasionally. The people of Canada require a much more reliable guarantee, but we do not get that in this bill.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain):** Other hon. members have pointed out that in this age of invention and modification between 50 and 100 new substances are introduced into the environment each year. How is the minister going to be alerted to the dangers that each of those pose with simply the mechanism in this bill? Is she going to wait for little birds to flutter down or, and this is more dangerous, wait for some disaster to occur to which she has to respond?

The bill has other weaknesses, and I intend to refer to them. The greatest weakness is that the bill, as it stands, may never be used because there is no trigger mechanism. There is no guaranteed way by which a minister of the Crown can become seized of knowledge which will cause the bill to be brought into effect. If the bill, on its face and in its provisions, holds the weakness that it may never be used, it is a pretty bad bill and requires substantial amendment by this House.

The bill is not preventive. I make that emphasis because there have been suggestions by the minister, her parlia-

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mentary secretary, and others who have spoken both inside and outside this House that the bill marks a major change, a change from simply a curative approach dealing with disasters or problems after they have arisen toward a preventive approach, trying to foresee these problems and stop them before they occur.

As I pointed out, the fundamental fault with the bill is that there is no reliable early warning to the minister. That means the bill is not preventive. To call it that is to make a sham of the suggestion. By definition this bill begins to work only after the danger exists.

Many of us in this House are acquainted with the use of the word preventive. We have heard it in terms of preventive welfare and preventive police work. The idea of preventive welfare is to stop welfare cases occurring before they do. Preventive police work is to stop crime before it starts.

The bill is based on what I call a complaints desk theory. If the minister were running a police department she would only have a complaints desk. She would not have any requirement that information come to her to show that there was a problem in the works which requires prevention. She would await a complaint. That is not adequate at a time like this, with a bill like this, and on a subject like the Canadian environment. Whatever else the bill might be, it is not preventive legislation.

The hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser) suggested a very sensible solution to this fundamental deficiency in the bill before us. The solution would require manufacturers to file information on a regular basis regarding new products or projects being undertaken which may cause the kind of danger that we foresee and for which this bill has been designed. If the suggestion of the hon. member for Vancouver South were accepted, the government would have some cause for suspicion and some evidence which could trigger the mechanism which we are establishing in this legislation.

As the hon. member for Vancouver South and others have pointed out, there is a precedent for this requirement of regular filing. A precedent has been set in the Pest Control Products Act which this House, and the committee studying this bill, should look at very closely so that the bill can live up to its advertising and be in fact preventive and not simply a curative device.

The proposal put forward by the hon. member for Vancouver South would place some hardships on the manufacturers, but I do not think they would be substantial. When dealing with as important a matter as the environment, we in this House should not be deterred from doing what has to be done simply because that necessary action might cause some hardships for some manufacturers. If we allowed that kind of limitation to stop us from performing, we would not be doing anything at all in the environmental field. With this bill I very much fear that we are on the edge of doing nothing, unless we accept a suggestion such as that put forward by the hon. member for Vancouver South.

Let me deal for a moment more with the hardships that might be imposed upon certain manufacturers. In her comments in this debate the minister testified that some manufacturers were already making submissions to her