

*Canadian Environmental Protection Act*

of the houses near those smelters. In spite of the orders of the city board of health and the provincial Government, in spite of lawsuits back and forth, in spite of innumerable tests conducted by provincial officials of the environment, the lead is still in the soil. In some cases where soil was removed and replaced with lead-free soil, more lead has been put into the soil by the same offending smelters.

That is the type of delay and log rolling that wealthy companies will use to prevent a law like this from becoming effective. To give them a two-tiered method of defence that first they can block the provincial Government, then they can force the provincial Government to block the federal Government, is simply asking for inaction in most cases.

We have heard reference to the very good principle stated by the Brundtland Commission to the effect that the standards should be national and they should be enforced nationally. Of course we have a divided jurisdiction between provincial and federal, but in a matter of national importance, which this is, that is no reason for essentially handing over control to provincial Governments and therefore to provincial private corporations that can dominate those Governments. There must be strong action by the national Government to prevent further pollution of the environment.

Of course this Bill will pass and we will support it. If somebody owes you a dollar and they are going to give you two cents, you do not refuse the two cents. This is worth approximately 2 per cent of the type of Bill that we ought to have and could have. We will accept it as far as it goes, but we are saying that it does not go anywhere near far enough to begin correcting the problems that we have with the pollution of our environment. It does not stand up to the industrial corporations that prefer to dirty one part of the world, and when it is impossible to live in or when it has removed everything that it wants, it moves on and dirties another part of the world. This Bill will not protect any part of Canada from that type of international thuggery by the corporations that have no respect for the environment when it comes to making money out of it.

We will be supporting the Bill, but I very much regret that the Government has produced such a weak Bill, and even weakened it a little since it was first written. I hope that the Government will reconsider some of its negative decisions on this Bill.

**Mr. Skelly:** I listened to the speech of the Hon. Member for Spadina (Mr. Heap), and I certainly identify with the remarks and his very cogent and intelligent analysis of the weakness in the legislation.

In a comment, I would like the Hon. Member to respond to the very real situation of environmental concern where 35 tonnes of concentrated sulphuric acid was inadvertently leaked from a pulp mill in the Campbell River area. This situation pointed to some very serious shortfalls in the manner in which the environment is protected, and certainly it would be our hope that legislation such as this could prevent it. It would

provide the tools in order that the federal Government could require those companies to put in place the mechanisms that would prevent those types of inadvertent spills and contamination of the environment. In this particular case, it would be a simple matter of holding tanks and settling tanks where the materials would not escape directly into the environment. That provide people with a back-up to impose a safety situation in this area, and also in the settling tanks would provide additional and more careful treatment of materials that are eventually released into the environment.

The Hon. Member for Spadina may be able to comment on the seriousness of this particular case, or perhaps other Members of the House might add a comment at this particular time. I know the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon), who is present and has been apprised of the situation, might be in a position to give the House a comment on that particularly serious situation.

**Mr. Heap:** I am not familiar with the details of the incident described by the Hon. Member. There is no question that it is a very serious failure to dump 35 tonnes of sulphuric acid in that manner.

I would compare that situation with the one I have already described in which, after it was well established that lead was harming the little children of the neighbourhood, it has still taken years to force a wealthy company to clean up the lead pollution. There is no question about the harm done. There is no question about the source of the harm. Yet after 15 years it is still extremely difficult to get those companies to spend money. The companies spend some money, but they will not spend enough to keep their operation from poisoning the neighbourhood.

In this case, since the matter concerns the fisheries, I am sure the Hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) is fully aware of the situation described by the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly), and has given it very careful thought. My colleague believes that the Minister of Fisheries would want to respond. I certainly have faith that the Minister would do that. It has been suggested that I yield the floor to him to do so now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** On another question, the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the contents of the Bill it calls for consultation with the Premiers. Could my hon. friend give us his view about whether there is any prospect whatsoever of agreement by the Premiers. My experience has been that they do not even agree on the time of day. All one has to do is to look at Newfoundland and Saskatchewan. Is it the view of the Hon. Member that the national Government should be setting national standards rather than attempting to get some type of unanimity out of the provinces? I wish to remind my hon. colleague that the territories are not even mentioned, only the provinces.