

*Proposed Committee on Pollution*

motion. I know that it calls for a special committee to be set up to deal specifically with pollution but I am not too sure we need a committee. We already have a national resources committee not much larger than the 15 man committee suggested here and it deals primarily with Canadian water resources. It would not be too difficult to have that committee tackle this problem. Mind you, I am not objecting to a special committee being set up. I say that because for many years I have spoken out against the lack of federal or provincial control over pollution. In this day and age it is a pretty severe indictment of the types of governments we have had, both federal and provincial, that we have reached the stage where pollution has become a danger of such proportions that mankind's very existence on earth is threatened.

In my hand I have a clipping printed by one of the British Columbia papers just over two years ago. The article is headed, "Man's Future Soon Will Be Known". It deals with the opinions of Ernst Mayr, director of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology. The article says in part:

Life on earth will probably persist for millions of years, but there is little chance man will be among the surviving species, a Harvard zoologist said here Monday. Ernst Mayr, director of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, said in an interview that we may soon know whether man will survive. Either some cataclysmic event, such as a nuclear war, will end man's tenure on earth, or through a tremendous effort of self-control he will make a new start, Mayr believes. One or the other probably will take place in the lifetimes of people now living, he said.

Describing himself as pessimistic of man's chances for survival, Mayr pointed out that 99 per cent of all life forms which have existed have become extinct. If man is to persist on earth there are two things he must do, and do at once, according to the Harvard scientist. He must quickly learn to control the increasing human population, and he must learn to stop destroying the environment.

"Man's ability to control the environment was said to be his biggest advantage over other species," Mayr said. "In the beginning this was true, as he invented shelters and clothing to protect him from the weather, and weapons and tools to help him harness the productivity of nature."

Mayr said the contrast of those ancient times with these modern times is dismal.

"Now almost everything we do is harmful to the species and works against its survival. We make the air unfit to breathe, the water unfit to drink, we seed the atmosphere with radioactivity, erode the soil, clear the land and plaster it with asphalt and concrete," he said. "Our destruction of our environment seems endless."

I will not read the rest of the article, but what I have read is a sampling of what has

[Mr. Harding.]

been coming to governments at all levels—municipal governments, provincial governments, federal governments and even to the United Nations. The top scientists of every nation on earth have warned that we are in danger of wiping mankind from the face of the earth. And we have been heedless of those warnings.

Politicians are primarily to blame for our pollution troubles. I say that because many politicians and governments are afraid to move against the powers that be which are responsible for much of the present-day Canadian pollution. Perhaps the offender is a big industrial plant pouring effluent into a river; perhaps it is a plant pouring filth into the air. Always the economic weapon that is used against the workers, governments and people of Canada is, "If we are forced to take effective measures, it will cost money and we will be priced out of the market." That is why all across the dominion of Canada in 1968—and I do not care where you go—there is no effective pollution control. Neither provincially nor federally have we proper legislation with teeth in it. There is no appropriate legislation in any of our great country's jurisdictions to take care of this problem which has become acute. I say it is time that Canadian politicians and the Canadian people realized that we cannot deal with pollution by closing our eyes and going to sleep. We must sit down realistically and tackle the problem, find out what is causing pollution, find out what it will cost to fight it and learn what governments will have to do to control it. We must discover what regulations will be necessary to fight pollution; we must draft and enforce those regulations regardless of which party is in power and see they are adhered to.

• (5:30 p.m.)

I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to one or two facts to show how serious the pollution problem is. I know there is not one hon. member in this house who has not a file on pollution and who cannot recite problems relating to some stream, river or lake with regard to pollution, or perhaps the problem might be one of air or land pollution.

I turn now to the situation in British Columbia. After all, I come from there and I am more familiar with what goes on in that province. We have a government in office in British Columbia which has ignored this problem. For two or three successive years