

Pesticide Residue Contamination

traced to the forage on three different farms. I presume it might have developed through the use of pesticides over a period of time or might have arisen from some other source of contamination; I just do not know. The authorities are investigating the problem and I presume their reports will be issued within the next month or so. The health authorities have assured the people of the area that public health is not in jeopardy.

This bill deals only with pesticides, and it is possible that the loss suffered by the farmers in my area may be traced to some other source. The loss of animals such as these is quite a blow to small farmers. Sometimes it is very difficult to find the source of contamination. The point I am trying to make this afternoon is that when examples of contamination arise with respect to any type of farm product anywhere in the country it seems to me there should be some kind of co-ordinated attack upon the problem. The health authorities would certainly have to enter the picture.

• (3:50 p.m.)

So far as the particular situation about which I am speaking is concerned, the provincial health services, Cominco officials at the Trail smelter, and officials of the B.C. Department of Agriculture, the federal Department of Agriculture and of the Food and Drug Directorate are interested in the problem. They want to find out how the lead contamination got into the forage and are following every lead they possibly can. I believe that a co-ordinated program should be laid out by the authorities of the federal and provincial departments of government in respect of pesticide poisoning or contamination from pollutants whether in the air or water.

While the bill covers loss to farmers from the use of pesticides, which naturally should come under the Department of Agriculture, there may be other causes of loss which should be investigated. I would appreciate it very much if the minister in the months ahead, if not now, would give some thought to this matter and consider having the officials of his department look into the possibility of tracking down all types of soil pollutants which in turn might get into forage. These pollutants might be detrimental in terms of loss of income to the farmers and in other ways to members of the public who might use the product concerned.

I thought I would mention this point because I feel that over the years we have to a very large degree neglected co-ordination of

the facilities which could be used to track down and probably eliminate a good many of these problems before they become too severe. I leave these thoughts with the minister. I certainly commend the department for bringing in this legislation.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I cannot say I am wildly enthusiastic about this bill; I am not dancing for joy in the aisles. I believe it has some useful purpose. I should like to say to the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher), to whose speech I listened with some interest, that he will be surprised to know to what extent and how frequently we in Her Majesty's loyal opposition seek to say to the government that we approve of its legislative proposals. We are looking for ways and means to praise the government and for an opportunity to say that measures which they bring up to some extent at least meet the problems of the country. Unfortunately, however, try as hard as we do and as often as we do the government keeps denying us the opportunity to make statements of that kind. So when we have a bill of this kind which has, to use a term in the bill, a residue of good we are inclined to praise it. This is the reason some of my colleagues both in this party and the party to the left are probably a little louder in their praise than might normally be the case.

There are some pitfalls in this legislation which I should like to draw to the attention of the minister in good faith because this is a new principle and a matter in respect of which we are breaking new ground. I have every confidence that the minister and his competent officials will keep the matter under study. While very large powers are given to the government, the minister and the assessors to act by regulation, I believe that if the minister feels changes are needed he will come back to the house so that the matter may be discussed in the light of experience and development. It is for this reason I bring some of these matters to the attention of the minister.

I feel that the farmer, to an unconscionably large degree, has been placed in the hands of the government, the minister and the officials. I say this after an examination of the various clauses in the bill. I believe this is important because the minister is breaking new ground. I had some experience in farming in the Peace River country above the 55th parallel during the previous Liberal government when a farmer was obliged to have a substantial income in addition to his income from his