

that their homes, their houses, their yards, the air they breathed, the ground their little children played on was being polluted by a lead smelter right next door. It was as close as the space behind the curtains is to the space where we sit in this House. This was an old junk yard which had evolved into a lead smelter for recycling car batteries, which of course is a worthy goal. Car batteries particularly have lead in them which should be recycled rather than just left lying about the city, or wasted by being put into dumps. But they were doing it carelessly. They were doing it in a way that allowed lead dust to escape into the streets around the smelter.

When the residents first came to the Board of Health, the Board of Health said: "We do not have the jurisdiction. Air pollution belongs to the provincial Government". There was a good deal of discussion back and forth about the health effects. There were surveys done. It was found that little children, who are the most vulnerable, had unsafe levels of lead in their blood.

The Board of Health made enough noise about it that finally the Government of Ontario, through its Environmental Protection Department, had to take the matter in hand because it did have legislation dealing with this to some extent.

Then, once the matter started to be investigated, after a year or two of argument and a year or two of continued poisoning of the air, once the provincial Government got into investigating it, enter International Lead Zinc Research Organization, ILZRO. This is an international body supported by the lead and zinc producers. They have a stable of experts who fly around to wherever there is a dispute about lead. It may be in England. It may be in Yugoslavia. It may be in Toronto, Ontario. They will give testimony, sworn testimony, to the effect that a little bit of lead does not hurt, and that really you cannot get rid of the lead out of the world and therefore you should put up with a little bit of lead.

They carried on weeks and months and even years of debate. They ran up quite a bill. They ran up a bill for the provincial Government, for the city Government, even for individual members of the board, because at one point the lead companies, as I say, tried to intimidate us by taking a court action against us. Their court action failed. They withdrew it. But it was a harassment. That is why the idea of a whistle-blower clause is a good thing in this Bill.

My point is that in order to clear up the poisoning of the air caused by one smelter on Bathurst Street, and, as we found, also another smelter on Pape Avenue, at the foot of Pape, it took years of dispute because wealthy companies resisted the clean-up. One smelter was not a wealthy company. The other smelter was part of Canadian Pacific Investments, one of the biggest outfits in Canada, willing to spend any amount of money to prevent the law from being enforced the way it should have been enforced.

This is the kind of thing we are up against. This is why it is unfortunate that Bill C-74 is such a weak law. It does not insist on standards. It talks about guidelines, so that companies will be offered sweet persuasion, which they will laugh at, if it

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means that they would be required to spend money to clean up. This does not do what many members of the public have asked, to declare a bill of rights. It does not say that people have a right to clean air, clean water and clean earth to live on. It suggests that the polluter may have rights overriding the rights of people whose lives are being polluted, that the polluter should not be required to lose money. That is not what the Bill says, but it is what it implies tacitly by refusing the public request made by many people to write in an environmental bill of rights.

This Bill appears to be ineffective against acid rain in Canada. It does not do much about it.

It is barred from dealing with pesticides, which are a problem, not just in the food producing areas but right downtown in the City of Toronto where it is a question of using pesticides in the parks.

It does not do anything about the nuclear damage to the environment: "Oh, that is somebody else's responsibility". That is being policed by the people, essentially, who make money out of producing nuclear energy and out of producing potential fuel for nuclear weapons. In other words, you put the fox in charge of the hen-house.

It does not do anything about the over production of packaging materials. A paper bag is not a toxic substance. But the amount of garbage, which is mostly packaging, is a very serious pollutant to the environment of our cities. This does nothing to reduce that.

We have a very weak law. It is made even weaker by the fact that the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) is prohibited from taking action on these matters until he has consulted all the relevant provincial Ministers, and until he is satisfied that there is one or more of them that is not going to take action that would come up to the expected goals of the federal laws. The federal Minister is required to offer that consultation within 30 days, but there is no time limit within which the provincial Ministers must answer. They can delay and delay and say, "We are thinking about it. We are talking with the polluting industries. Give us more time", and the pollution goes on and on. The staff work and the cost of the work goes on and on, but there is no action. There is nothing to require provincial Ministers to answer within a certain time, "Yes, we have done it", or "Yes, we are going to do it within a certain time", or "No, we are not going to do it". Therefore, the federal Minister will find himself tied hand and foot when he wants to take some type of action.

• (1700)

A further problem is that the consultation program as carried on by the provincial Governments, and I give the example of Ontario in connection with the lead and zinc organization, can carry on quite indefinitely. I have mentioned this action that was carried out in the 1970s. In 1973 we began it, and to this day the problem of lead in the soil has not been fully corrected. That is 15 years later. There is lead in the soil