

Pest Control Products Act

because, after all, it was he who introduced the bill. He is not here. There is not anyone who can reply.

Mr. Nielsen: Good point.

The Chairman: By unanimous consent, we are now in committee of the whole.

An hon. Member: There's the minister!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: There is the biggest pest of all!

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): No control over that pest!

Mr. Kempling: The original boll weevil!

The Chairman: Shall Clause 1 carry?

On Clause 1—*Act binding on Her Majesty*

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Chairman, I would like to place a few questions before the minister concerning the amendment we are considering today. My first question concerns the testing of new pesticides and herbicides. Is the minister aware that the testing procedures not only of the IBT labs, but also those of other labs, are questionable? Is his department looking into any products which have been registered, based on the results of these other labs? Is his department looking into those results as well?

I also question the necessity of this amendment. What are the incidents in which Crown corporations and other agencies of provincial government have used chemicals which have not been registered in Canada? Could he tell us when these incidents took place? Can he identify the Crown corporations or provincial authorities which have used chemicals which were not properly registered in Canada? I think it would be useful for the House to know where and when these products were used and the types of product used.

In the minister's speech introducing the bill he mentioned the good work of his department in trying to develop other forms of biological pest and weed control. I wonder as well if he could enumerate these projects and perhaps give us an indication of the dollar amounts involved when he stands up to answer. My understanding is that roughly only \$500,000 is expended for testing non-chemical forms of weed and pest control.

I would also like to ask the minister a question concerning correspondence between his department and the Department of National Health and Welfare, particularly concerning a letter which was sent to his department on July 16, 1980, by the Deputy Minister of National Health and Welfare. The deputy minister made the request that the Department of National Health and Welfare be specifically mentioned in the Pest Control Products Act, and that if the Department of Agriculture were to introduce any new amendments, serious consideration should be given to specifically mentioning the Department of National Health and Welfare. Her request is as follows:

● (1550)

That is, groups outside the Federal government do not see an active role within the present act for the Department of National Health and Welfare. Perhaps such a misunderstanding could be eliminated if this department was named in the act at some time in the future, when Agriculture Canada presents to cabinet proposed changes to the Pest Control Products Act. Such an action would place more emphasis on the health aspects of pesticides—

What was the response of his department to that request from the Deputy Minister of National Health and Welfare? Why was the Department of National Health and Welfare not listed as one of the responsible departments under the Pest Control Products Act? I made a suggestion in my speech to the minister, a suggestion that I have made to him in committee and on the floor of the House, that he seriously consider supporting the motion of a parliamentary inquiry into the whole chemical area so that all members of the House can take an in depth look at what is occurring and what possible alternatives there could be, such questions as the contamination of the environment, conceivable health defects to both users and consumers of agricultural products. I would like to hear the minister respond to the motion of a parliamentary inquiry being set up to look into all of the implications and questions concerning chemical uses in agriculture.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Chairman, I do not have the time to go over all the questions which the hon. member asked. I do not have all of the information with me. As I outlined when we presented the bill, it was a very simple one, and not that detailed. I outlined why the amendments were needed. I can get evidence for the hon. member if he wants it, and submit it to him as to why we wanted one body on which the provinces could depend; also, if I am aware of other groups that carried out testing that was not legitimate. Even with the control of expenditures in our department that is why spent several million dollars on new equipment of our own. We feel we can do a legitimate job of testing, but it is going to take some time. If we can find the people, and I do know there are some, we can farm out some of this work to them and that is what we will be doing. However, we think that every chemical should be constantly brought up to standard by double checking to make sure that the proper ingredients are there.

The hon. member talks about biological control. I do not know whether the hon. member has visited the station that is situated in the city of Regina, but it is doing some amazing work. When you talk to people there and hear what they are projecting for the next two to five years, you find they feel they are well on their way to controlling many pests on which he used pesticides. They are even making sure that some of the insects chewing up the bad weeds do not get out of control and are safe. All those tests have to be gone through.

Maybe we are not spending as much money, but we are signing agreements with other countries and having an exchange of scientists who do that kind of work. The most recent is with the U.S.S.R. Some people may scoff at that. When we were there we visited their orchards. We know they are doing good work. If we can find out one new way from them or vice versa and perhaps put them together, it could mean a tremendous saving for both our countries in terms of