

Supply

interesting to listen to the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier) and to some of the charges that have been laid against her as far as the PCB spill is concerned and as far as the power that she possesses under the Act, the present legislation, to do something about it.

It is a somewhat confused area. However, it is not good enough for the Minister of the Environment to say that this is provincial jurisdiction. It is not good enough for us to have legislation on the books that we in effect are not using or to refer back to legislation that was formulated at a particular moment in time and to discover that that legislation was perhaps watered down from its original intent.

I would like to make reference to what the Minister of the Environment said by reading from the official record. I would like to read her remarks and her repeated references to provincial jurisdiction and to the suggestion that perhaps we should not be progressing as adamantly as some Members of the Opposition are suggesting.

I would like to read from the House of Commons debates these words:

I said at the outset of my remarks that we approve of the principle of the Bill before us and indeed of its objectives, but I must say that we insist that these objectives be met without imposing excessive costs or hardships, and with the minimum of restraint put upon the operations of the carriers and the shippers.

Then later on this Hon. Member said:

—this Bill is really an extension of the Criminal Code, not merely a transportation law.

Those remarks were made by the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) speaking on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party on February 16, 1979, when a Bill was introduced into the House by the then Liberal Government. The Act was changed. The original Bill presented in February, 1979 was an Act to promote public safety and the protection of the environment in the transportation of dangerous goods. The Bill we have on the books was passed in 1979 by the Government that followed the Liberal Government. The Minister of Transport whose words I quoted a moment ago was the Minister who passed the Bill through this House on behalf of the Government. The Bill was called "An Act to promote public safety in the transportation of dangerous goods".

The Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) made repeated reference in 1979 to why the word "environment" was removed from the title of the Bill and, indeed, from the entire Bill. I think that sets the record straight fairly well, Mr. Speaker. To repeat the words of the present Minister of Transport in introducing this present Bill that is on the books, he said, as reported in *Hansard* for November 27, 1979:

Those Hon. Members—will note that the Bill currently before the House has been extensively restructured . . . This restructuring has been done as a result of lengthy and detailed discussions with representatives of affected industries and of the provinces, as I indicated earlier. However, as time passed, and as it was made clear that the federal Government was seeking co-operation and not confrontation in this enterprise, debates between the parties concerned became increasingly productive.

Increasingly productive, Mr. Speaker, when you do not want to have a confrontationalist attitude with the provincial governments and the industries involved. Just imagine, Mr. Speaker,

the position of the Party being that you would not want to impose excessive costs or hardships and with a minimum of restraint put upon the operations of the carriers and the shippers. It is incredible philosophy when you talk about an Act that is supposed to protect the people and the environment of Canada in the transportation of hazardous goods.

I think the important point that should be made is that you simply say this is a problem of the provincial administrations, and that the provincial administrations do not act under their present legislation or they behave like the Ontario Government behaved in 1979 when it passed the Spills Act and never proclaimed it. Right now the Ontario Government has bought chemicals to spray over a million hectares in the Province of Ontario but it cannot be announced until the day after the election. What if you have a Government like the Government of Ontario that has jurisdiction but did absolutely nothing when cancerous tumours were found in fish and you had only the inland waters division of the Minister of the Environment conducting studies through a couple of person-years?

What happens when you have that kind of negligence on the part of a provincial government? What happens when you have the provincial Government of Ontario today with a Spills Act passed by the legislature but which was never proclaimed? What happens when you have a Government that has purchased materials for the biggest chemical air spraying program in Ontario's history, that has the materials in storage, that has consulted with the Canadian Wildlife Service on the actual application dates and then turns around and says "We cannot announce this program until the day after the election"? The Government of Ontario has made decisions on the types of herbicides it will use to kill the hardwoods. The Government does not want to hire people to go into the woods to do it. The Government will spray chemicals to kill the hardwoods in certain parts of Ontario and most of the activity is taking place in the northern part of Ontario; at least that is what the Government informs me. What happens when you have provincial governments like the Ontario Government that do not follow through with legislation or that play political games when it comes to chemicals?

If you say this is a matter of provincial jurisdiction but you have no action on the part of the provincial jurisdiction, then surely this Government has a duty to act. You will find in a lot of legislation, even in the transportation of dangerous goods and hazardous products legislation that is on the books now, that there is a clause that says after 12 months if a provincial government does not act, the federal Government has the right to impose its own standards. When you are so short-sighted that you do not pay attention to the long-term effects of chemicals on the environment and on people, then you are being absolutely negligent.

We could talk about PCBs or we could talk about fenitrothion, which is the chemical that is being used in northern Ontario, the spraying of which is to be announced the day after the election when over one million hectares will be sprayed and about which the Minister of the Environment is aware. We could talk Roundup, a chemical which is used as a