

the literature of as high or higher concentrations have appeared for many years.

If these levels of pollution can be reduced without serious loss or disruption to the community, it is self-evident that action should be taken. However, we must not let that obscure the fact that many more serious problems of pollution, such as emissions from heavy industry, still remain to be controlled. We do not want to underestimate the importance of motor vehicle anti-pollution measures, but this is by no means the major problem of its kind facing Canada today.

We in the department are aware of the importance of this whole question. I do not want to go into all the things we are doing, but let me say just a word about the work that is being done. We are undertaking an assessment for the control of air pollution which occurs at the border with the United States, particularly in the Windsor and Sarnia areas. Research studies to determine the most effective ways of controlling air pollution at the source also form part of the current research work of the department.

We realize that while progress is being made the problem is of such proportions as to demand ever-increasing resources when these can be made available. There are many policy implications involved in the development of the components of a national clean air act that might be passed by the parliament of Canada. We are aware that the federal government must take an important and I think leading role in any campaign to control air pollution, and it must be able to fulfil this role by assisting in the co-ordinating of the work of the provinces and the many other agencies involved.

We have under consideration at the present time a number of elements or components that might form part of a national clean air act. The first is the establishment of air quality criteria and emission standards on a uniform, national basis, and their maintenance by an efficient monitoring system to ensure that continuous improvement is made; second, ensuring a uniform approach to the control of motor vehicle pollution and seeing that the requirements involved in such a uniform approach are constantly revised according to the latest available information and progress made at any time; third, the provision of technical assistance to provincial control agencies by means of advice from a specially trained organization within the federal government; fourth, the continuation of research into specific air pollution problems

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and their effects upon human health and amenities as well as on livestock, vegetation and property.

Of course, as a further component the sources of air pollution within the federal government—I am not talking about the House of Commons—must be regulated by the installation of proper equipment to meet the most stringent emission standards. We think there may be a place for financial assistance to provinces, universities and other organizations to carry on research leading to the control of air pollution.

The hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) suggested the possibility of an advisory council on air pollution or a group of citizens or officials, or a combination of both, which might advise the government or the minister on the control of air pollution in Canada. We are giving serious consideration within the department to this question.

• (4:30 p.m.)

The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam suggested amendments might be made to the Criminal Code to cope with the problem of air pollution especially. The hon. member for Comox-Alberni, who spoke later in the debate, questioned the desirability or necessity of such action. I tend to agree with him on that.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Speaker, I said that would not be the only or main action in dealing with the problem and, if I may say so, that is all that was suggested by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam.

Mr. MacEachen: I tend to believe that the development of close consultation with the provinces to achieve the objectives I have outlined might be better in the circumstances than to use, as my hon. friend said, the punitive and restrictive provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Mr. Douglas: May I ask the minister a question? In view of the fact that the two proposals he referred to are not mutually exclusive, do I take it the minister is suggesting that with all the co-operation and consultation with the provincial authorities, with which we thoroughly agree, in the final analysis an anti-pollution program can be carried out purely on a voluntary basis without any authority vested in the government to enforce compliance by some recalcitrant company which refuses to comply with the requests of either the federal or provincial governments?