

*Environmental Pollution*

neither Canada nor the U.S. are to pollute the Great Lakes' system. It is a rather sad commentary on the present and past governments that legislation affecting our environment has been allowed to lie dormant on the statute books, with no action being taken by the United States or Canada to try to end pollution problems. I wish to point out to hon. members that we have a host of legislation on our statute books—as does our neighbour across the forty-ninth parallel—under which, if action had been taken, we would not be facing the pollution problems we are talking about this afternoon.

The motion is extremely wide in scope, Mr. Speaker, and I intend to deal only with one or two aspects of it. I do not intend to talk it out. I hope we will be able to have a vote on it this afternoon and that it will pass, so we may set up an institute of human environmental studies. I believe that one of the keys to the solution of pollution problems has to do with population growth. This is something that should be rather simple for nations to understand, yet we have ignored population growth control because it is a question which might upset groups of people politically. If over the next 30 years we are able to cut pollution in half, but the population of the world doubles, we will end up having just as much pollution in the world as we have now. It seems to me that governments are not paying attention to this matter, outside the efforts of the United Nations.

We must sit down, study, determine and chart the paths that we feel this and other countries should travel. There is another aspect to this population growth matter. If the population of the world doubles within the next 30 years, the need for resources will also double. Then we get down to the basic problem of resource planning. Mr. Speaker, what has been done by the government of Canada and by the governments of other countries in the field of resource planning?

We have done precious little planning in Canada. People who have spent much time studying the problem have indicated that if all the resources of the world could be dug up and used within the next few years, the present population of the world would never reach the living standards that we Canadians presently enjoy. That is a disturbing aspect of the over-all picture so far as resources and pollution are concerned.

Dealing with the question of raw materials, we have not yet made a survey to determine how much iron ore Canada will need in the year 2000, and how much of the various other types of minerals we will require for domestic use. Government departments have not yet determined how much of the raw material we have already taken from the earth and turned into manufactured goods can be re-used and recycled. All this is part of the pollution problem. The recycling of minerals and other materials which we have used once, and which can be used again, is something that would help combat pollution. Governments, industries and individuals should examine this matter. I suggest it will only be a matter of time before we are forced to undertake a tremendous amount of re-use and recycling of our resources, resources which the nations of the world are presently wasting. I have been told that we would not need another

[Mr. Harding.]

pulp mill in Canada for a number of years if we re-used the paper and paper products which we currently waste. We should be researching and taking action along these lines in order to find out just what we can do to cut down pollution which arises, for example, when we get rid of paper by burning it.

● (4:50 p.m.)

There are two or three more points I should like to speak about briefly before sitting down. We are talking about the pollution difficulties facing Canada. The Parliamentary Secretary has just spoken, and I enjoyed his speech very much. He is to be involved with a new department relating to the environment. Although that will be a step forward, I do not think it goes far enough; I do not think the responsibilities of the department will be wide enough to handle all the pollution problems of Canada. He indicated the steps the government was taking, but here we are in January, 1971, and land use regulations have not been introduced. Half of our country consists of the northern part of Canada where a great deal of oil and mineral exploration is going on. Today there are no land use regulations laid down by the government for the direction and control of development in this vast area. Is that modern thinking? No. This is stupidity of the worst kind.

Indications have come from the minister that we are to see such land use regulations next month. Nevertheless, for years this type of development has been going on unregulated and we now find that vast areas of our great north are being destroyed. The people of Canada for hundreds of years to come will pay the penalty because governments of the 1970s did not have the vision to lay down these regulations and make certain that industries and organizations developing and exploiting our resources did so under conditions which are considered safe. Great disasters have occurred in the north. Recently a most disastrous fire broke out which is still burning. Over 4 billion cubic feet of gas have been destroyed. In the drilling of the well concerned, the regulations were broken. We need land use regulations and we need many of them.

Other members have mentioned noise pollution. I have spoken briefly on the need for research into the sonic boom from supersonic transport aircraft. The minister has indicated that such research projects are under way. This is all to the good. As this motion very ably points out, noise as well as other types of air pollution produces a detrimental effect on the quality of the lives of Canadian citizens and the citizens of other countries. The motion asks the government to set up the new department already mentioned.

I urge members of this House to vote in favour of the motion this afternoon and, if necessary, to refer it to the appropriate committee in order to define the type of environmental agency which should be set up. Our constituents have entrusted us with the task of coming to this House of Commons and dealing with pollution. Not only must we try to save the lives of the people of our own country but we must help in the fight against pollution which threatens the existence of mankind. I urge hon. members to vote for the motion we are debating.