

again refer to the speech of the former minister of the environment as recorded at page 1729 of *Hansard* for April 24, 1974:

Its impact on our quality of life will be known in advance. It will be known before it is mass produced and before it gets into our natural environment in a big way.

This legislation, aimed at dealing with environmental contaminants before they contaminate our natural surroundings, has not been developed in a vacuum. We have been in close consultation with industry.

Well, I wonder whether they have been in very close consultation with industry. They have certainly been in enough consultation with industry to know that a vast number of these substances are being produced every year. Surely, if the government had been in close consultation with industry, they would know perfectly well that the substances are produced, set up for market, distributed and used in industrial processes. If you do not find out about them until you suspect something is wrong, that is not preventive legislation; it is remedial legislation. If the government wants to come before this House and present remedial legislation, they should tell us that is what they are doing; they should not play games with us or the Canadian public by pretending they are bringing forward preventive legislation when people ought to know perfectly well they are not.

When introducing the bill on November 19, the parliamentary secretary said this new bill is substantially the same as the previous one. I quote from page 1476 of *Hansard*:

... we are moving from cure to prevention.

That is just not so in this bill. He went on to say:

... we have also been phasing-in measures to prevent the damage before it occurs.

How the devil are you going to prevent damage before it occurs, if you cannot act on it until you find out something that creates suspicion that damage is already being done? You cannot do it. You can twist, fiddle, shift or move around all you want. You can play with words but you cannot get around facts. In the same reference, the parliamentary secretary said:

One of the two key goals of Bill C-25 is to answer questions about chemical substances which are, or might become, contaminants of the environment.

That clearly is not the purpose of this bill. I challenge the parliamentary secretary on that statement. This bill only goes into effect if the government suspects that something is wrong, and you do not suspect unless you find out something is going wrong. This is not a preventive bill; it is a bill that moves for remedies only after a problem has been suspected or found. As I said previously, if the government came before us and said, "Look, we have problems here. We do not know how to find out in advance what is going to happen. It is very, very difficult to know, and the best we can do is patch it up afterwards", that would be one thing. However, that is not the position of the government. The government is trying to kid the Canadian people into thinking this is a preventive bill when it is not. That is the defect in it. Maybe I am too strong in saying the government is trying to kid the people, but that may be the effect of it. Maybe the government hoped so badly that it could come forward with

Health and the Environment

legislation that would be preventive that it did not look long enough and hard enough at the facts.

With the number of substances that are being produced annually—which the government admits and industry knows all about—how can you prevent unless there is some reporting system whereby, when a new product comes on stream or is about to come on stream, notice is given by industry, the inventor or the vendor to the government agency that there is a new product. I am not asking that when a new product or a new process is developed you at all times make absolutely certain there will not be some deleterious effects in due course, under certain circumstances. I think it would be straining common sense a bit to do that. But surely it is not straining common sense to ask that industry report to government what it is producing, so that at least the government can take a second look at it and have a better chance of being in a position to know what is going on.

● (2100)

This is not without precedent. I quote from a letter from the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) which was sent to me some time ago concerning the use of phenoxy herbicides. The minister is very much involved in this bill and I thank him for his courtesy in sending me the letter in response to a question I had asked. He said:

All pesticides, including the phenoxy herbicides, must be registered under the Pest Control Products Act before they are sold in Canada. This act is administered by Plant Products Division, Agriculture Canada, and requires registrants to submit suitable supporting evidence of their product's efficacy, safety, residues and effects on the environment before registration or sale.

Surely, when we demand this in one piece of legislation we should not back up when putting forward a bill which we are telling the public will prevent these noxious substances getting into the environment. The minister sent me a release, dispatch bulletin No. 6, dated June, 1970, which reads:

Under the authority of the Food and Drugs Act, the Health Protection Branch is charged with the responsibility of protecting man by prohibiting the sale of a food product which may contain, in or upon it, any poisonous or harmful substance.

It went on:

The branch requires manufacturers of pesticides for which tolerances are to be established to submit detailed data on the following...

A number of requirements are then set out with a view to compiling information needed by the government if it is to know what is going on. In this case the government will not know what is going on until someone registers a complaint or, possibly by inadvertence, suspicions are aroused. I know that the Minister of the Environment and her parliamentary secretary are very concerned about the thinking behind this bill. I am not suggesting there is any lack of concern here, but I state bluntly that if those responsible for the legislation before us stop at this point, the act, when in force, will not be effective.

On April 24, 1974, an article appeared in the *Globe and Mail* entitled "Disastrous pollution threat seen in organic compound use". The article says this, discussing the situation in the United States: