

*Environmental Contamination*

Water Act, and we need a broader piece of legislation to deal with them as they are developed and offered for our use in the future.

A third example is a group of compounds, the so-called chlorinated hydrocarbons like DDT. They are also chemical in nature. They are, most of them, extremely harmful from a biological point of view. We have to keep them under control. Many of them, environmentally speaking, should never see the light of day. Like the PCB's, they are a contaminant in the worst sense of the word. We should not allow them to be produced in any quantity. Certainly they should never be allowed outside the factory fence. They are an emphatic no-no, from an environmental point of view. They should be stopped in their tracks and a new Environmental Contaminants Act is needed to make sure they never leave the laboratory, let alone be produced on a pilot scale anywhere in this country.

Having given a few examples, I should now like to describe, in a more general way, what is meant by an environmental contaminant. Environment Canada, in requesting information about new products from chemical and other firms, will be asking about their chemical, biological and toxicological properties. It will be asking these firms about their persistence in the environment. It will be asking the firms to anticipate the way in which these new products or class of products will be dispersed in our natural surroundings. Environment Canada will want them to anticipate the manner in which they will be concentrated in some of our foodstuffs or in substances which are consumed by other living things. How might they be sold and with what limitation? Do they break down naturally and can they eventually be assimilated in our natural scheme of things? And, otherwise, what measures, if any, are being made for their recycling and recovery by industry?

We need this information urgently because literally hundreds of new chemicals are being introduced into our local environment every year. Some of them should be withdrawn; that is after the event. But many others can be intercepted in the future; that is ahead of the event. It is the ahead of the event operation which our new Environmental Contaminants Act is all about. However, it can also be used to deal with harmful substances which are already making a mess of things and which, using any reasonable standard of environmental housekeeping, should be withdrawn from the market today.

There is reference in Bill C-3 to a schedule. This is a schedule or list of substances which will either be restricted or banned by Environment Canada. The naming of a substance to a schedule, in other words, withdraws it from circulation or, as is much more likely in the future, will prevent it from being manufactured or imported in the first place. The list will undoubtedly grow as time goes by. Occasionally, on further testing, some names of substances may be deleted from the schedule, but these are likely to be exceptions rather than the rule. More and more chemical-type substances will be banned or limited because we are becoming more inventive all the time. Chemical-type industries are expanding faster than most other activities and the diversity of their output is proliferating with the passage of time.

[Mr. Davis.]

The Minister of the Environment will obviously need a lot of advice. There is provision in Bill C-3, therefore, for the setting up of advisory committees. These will be established to hear representations from interested parties—that is to say, manufacturers, importers, users and others who may be directly affected by this new law—or concerned members of the public whose advice will also be sought in order to help the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of National Health and Welfare to decide on the names of products or groups of products which should be added to the schedule and which should not.

Bill C-3 also provides for the creation of ad hoc boards of review. This provision was included at the request of industry. It will give any company or individual affected by this legislation an opportunity to state his or her case. Producers, importers, etc., will therefore have an avenue of appeal open to them. These industry-oriented boards of review will have powers and responsibilities similar to those already enjoyed by the board of review under our Canadian Hazardous Products Act.

Still on the subject of relations with industry, I would like to say this: We do not want to be working at cross purposes. We want industrial development in the sense of new industry and new products. We want more industry, better industry, in order to generate more and better jobs. But we do not want, at the same time, to be spewing out hundreds of additional products every year, a sizeable number of which are harmful to our natural environment. We want to preserve quality while enjoying more in the sense of quantity. We want to maintain, and if possible improve, our quality of life while, at the same time, enjoying a rising material standard of living.

This legislation certainly goes with the grain of nature. I believe that it can also go with the grain of development. A forward looking industry does not really want to produce a product or class of products which is going to be banned at a later date. It does not want to get a bad name for producing something which is frowned upon by a large segment of our population. So an early screening process makes a lot of sense, not only from an environmental point of view but also from an economic point of view. It makes a lot of sense to developers who want to see a good financial return on their investment, and a good financial return means many years of successful sales. Continuity in sales means compatibility with the rest of the marketplace and the marketplace of modern man is much more sensitive to the needs of our environment than it was even a few short years ago.

Bill C-3, our new Environmental Contaminants Act, breaks new ground. It breaks new ground on the environmental front. But it is not unprecedented in the sense that we have similar screening arrangements in respect of foods and drugs and other hazardous substances. It is new or advanced in the sense that no other country has gone as far as we are going in this connection. A similar bill is before Congress in the United States. Similar legislation is already in effect in Sweden, but is not quite as good as ours. It does not involve as close a liaison with the private sector as ours does.

I commend this legislation to all members in this House, Mr. Speaker. I think it is a good bill and one which merits the whole-hearted support of all hon. members here. I