

looking at what is happening in the environment, without really examining the kind of matters which are of great concern.

One of the things that I would like to draw to the attention of the House is that interesting analysis provided by Barry Commoner, who I think is an acknowledged expert in environmental matters. He said in the *New Yorker* magazine about two months ago that one of the real disillusion for him personally as a leading environmental advocate is how in the last 10 years or so the environmental cause has become more of a lobby than a crusade, that this is simply another business-as-usual public policy matter that can be dealt with in the normal routine ways. We have kind of lost that sense of outrage and indignation. I can recall as a young student hearing Rachel Carson talking about the *Silent Spring*. It was then that we first discovered that our systems of nature, our ecology, were being poisoned.

• (1320)

The problem is that we started dealing with symptoms and not with causes. The fundamental cause is the way in which we organize our economy. Most environmental pollution is not caused by a secret band of environmental criminals who are out spilling oil into water or deliberately spewing things into the air. It is caused most often by those to whom we give the most respect, those who produce our goods and services, and by consumers themselves. Because we place such a premium on economic calculations we have avoided and evaded environmental ones.

It has been pointed out that perfectly good products that used to be drawn from natural commodities are now being replaced by artificial sources which require the use of far more petrochemicals, which has created a generation of something in the order of 40,000 or 50,000 new forms of chemicals in the last decade. These are all designed to ensure that we do not put our groceries in paper bags any more but, instead, in high-falutin plastic things that may cost less. But when we add up the spoilage of our ecology that is taking place and the spoilage of our human bodies, then those costs cannot be calculated.

We do not have the courage or the sense to tackle this issue. We just nibble at it, but only around the edges. We marginalize environmental issues by saying, "Let's tinker with it. Let's find some kind of soporific answer. Let's provide a few little penalties and fines", rather than saying that there are certain things that should not be produced and just getting rid of them.

We just cannot afford, as some western countries have pointed out, the use of DDT. It is poison. It gets into the food-chain and ends up in birds, human beings, fish and everything else. The only final answer is to get rid of it. The answer is not to say to some manufacturer, "If you are found using it we will give you a \$5,000 fine, if we are able to take you to court". As we have pointed out, there have been something in the order of only 18 initiatives taken to court over the last few years. That

is hardly what we would call putting fear and trepidation into the hearts and minds of polluters.

The fact of the matter is that if we want ultimately to come to grips with environmental issues in North America, to say nothing of other parts of the world, then we have to face up to some very hard economic questions. One is whether or not we want to continue to produce these products.

When I was the Minister of Transport we were being diligently lobbied by people in the Toronto area, to say nothing of those in other urban areas, about the movement of dangerous goods. The following is a wonderful case study of how not to do something. I am quite happy to offer it to the House because it is past history and it was my own Government which was responsible. We identified that the rail and truck cartage of dangerous goods had reached catastrophic proportions, that the numbers and volumes of railway cars and long-haul vehicles going through our major cities each day was increasing geometrically, and that the mathematical probabilities of a serious disaster taking place was increasing by the same proportions. Governments laboured mightily after the horrible accident in Mississauga to come up with answers. We came up with a stack of regulations on how to identify dangerous chemicals, what to do in case of accident, whom to notify, if chlorine gets on the skin what kind of crisis centre should be talked to and who should be informed. We did everything but ban the movement of dangerous chemicals through highly-populated urban areas.

We have the biggest pile of red tape and regulations that one has ever seen because we were not prepared to face a fundamental issue by telling chemical companies, the railroads and others, "I am sorry, you cannot take those goods through downtown Toronto, Winnipeg or Halifax. We will have to build railway yards that skirt the cities. We will have to find other forms of protection".

I see the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper) is in the House. He and I live in a city where a major railway assembly line is in the middle of the city. I would not want to frighten this House by telling Hon. Members how many dangerous goods go through that piece of geography per day and threaten the lives of people on its periphery. I think it is best to say that both the Hon. Member and I have fought over the years to get that railway yard removed. I can tell Hon. Members from where the opposition came. It came from all the very powerful economic sources in the country which have said, "We are not prepared to do it". Why are they not prepared to do it? Because it will cost a certain railway \$115 million. Hon. Members have only two to choose from, so they can take their pick. The same is true in Calgary where there was a serious accident that was almost catastrophic and was simply averted by timing. There have been similar close calls in virtually every city of the country. Yet we are not prepared to come to grips with the central issue, which is either finding some way of putting an embargo on this type of multiplication of artificial and highly toxic matters or at least finding ways of providing some immunity to people and the environment