

Supply

Many of us are interested in various forms of energy such as atomic energy. I have a research lab in my own riding, and tremendous work is being done by the men and women there.

The ability of a society in the western world to move forward in a technological sense, whether it is with that form of energy or chemicals, seems to be limited only by the ability of the human mind. Sometimes we are restricted by finances, but the ability to move ahead is absolutely critical. However, often the ethical and moral questions do not keep pace with that advancement, or they seem to lag. It is not that many of us are uninterested in these issues, but those components are often left out of the manner in which we structure research and development. It is not that we wish to ignore them, but the other issue becomes so important that we forget about them. That is to our detriment, and I say it very sincerely. Our task as a society must be to ensure that the unavoidable impact upon our environment does not render it unproductive. We must not impair its ability to provide for our survival and the survival of future generations. As we all know, we need the environment for the food we grow, the forests we use, the water we drink, the air we breathe and so forth.

As a society we are now releasing enormous amounts of chemicals into the environment, both deliberately and inadvertently. This is not a new problem; this is not a new issue. However, it is one about which we are all concerned. Therefore, on behalf of the Minister of the Environment I should like to indicate that the Government is committed to action. We are working with the United States, with specific states such as New York, toward a permanent solution, for example, to the leaking of dump sites along the Niagara River. We are co-operating with a range of jurisdictions to reduce the loading of dioxins entering the environment from all sources. With our federal and provincial colleagues we are looking at better ways to manage pesticides.

Our point of view must be made strongly and must be made in various fora. However, it is important for us to keep in mind that technology is giving us the capacity to determine in the case of dioxins their presence. As recently as a year ago, we were unable to do that. I know the Minister of the Environment has tried to put into perspective, for example, the level of dioxins by putting it in terms of time, namely, one second as compared with 32 centuries. To put it another way and to give Hon. Members some clarification, a year ago in my Department we were measuring it in parts per billion. A year or two before we were measuring it in parts per million. This year we have the ability to measure it in parts per quadrillion. Consequently, because of the new sophistication in testing, we have been able to discover it.

I am simply saying that these points have to be put forward. Very often when society hears these things it becomes naturally and rightfully concerned. In order to solve the problem and to inform the public, these issues should be put in this context so that solutions can be found.

I know of the concerns expressed by some people. The Hon. Member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy) knows about the public meeting which took place this weekend in the

City of Windsor in respect of environmental issues. It was a further demonstration of the concerns of people regarding the issue which we are debating today.

As a Government and with the co-operation of industry, we have initiated a review of safety precautions and procedures at industrial sites across the country to avoid, for example, the terrible tragedy which we saw at Bhopal as well as other chemical accidents. I am pleased, on behalf of the Minister of the Environment, to notify the House that the Minister will be prepared to release that plan to Canadians when he returns to the House within a short period of time.

Also we have initiated an action plan with provincial Governments to eliminate PCBs from the Canadian environment. We are assisting in the clean-up of chemicals leaking from dumps, from land-filled sites and from storage facilities. The actions of the Government will reduce emissions from cars and light-duty trucks by 45 per cent over the next decade. These emissions not only affect the health of Canadians but, as we all know, contribute to acid rain. Nobody has been more active, Mr. Speaker, than the Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling) who is in the House today. Mr. Speaker, I see certain people, for instance, wearing buttons on their lapels saying stop acid rain. Well, I know one thing, the Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka doesn't carry around buttons, what he does is take action. He keeps on buttonholing Members of the Government, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health. That is his job and he is doing it well. I think all of us we have to commend him for the work he has done.

● (1220)

Within six months this Government put in place a comprehensive federal-provincial program to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 50 per cent by 1994. We are acting to eliminate lead in gasoline, a very real danger to children. These are urgent problems that this Government is acting to solve. The Government is committed to solving permanently those problems that have plagued Canadians for so many years. Toxic chemicals are one of those problems which we are preparing permanent solutions to as, I have just outlined.

We are all aware of how costly environmental problems are, both in terms of public safety and in terms of financial commitment. The very fabric of our industrial economy is being affected by the enormous cost of dealing with our past approach to chemicals. For example, it cost Dow Chemicals close to \$1.5 million to clean up the St. Clair River blobs, and we estimate that federal and provincial Governments spent approximately another \$1 million more. These moneys, I think all of us would recognize, could have been more productively used in our economy, than for cleaning up after a problem has occurred.

The Government believes it is no longer adequate in Canada to deal with toxic chemicals after problems are detected. I know that is a human approach that will have to remain in place, but it is not enough. Our approach is two-pronged, first to clean up the problems that exist, as I've already demonstrated. Second, to prevent new ones from occurring. To be success-