

*Clean Air Act*

years. Our research on this matter covers a period of several years. Some departments have never laid a charge under their regulations. According to our research, in a period of more than seven years not one single charge has been laid under a number of such pieces of legislation. One or two departments have laid charges. The fisheries department has laid charges, as has the Department of Transport, with relation to shipping. Otherwise, only a minor number of charges have been laid. Most of such legislation on the statute books has never been enforced. In addition, legislation aimed at attacking pollution has never been co-ordinated. Apparently one department will not be responsible for the co-ordinated attack on air pollution problems. Consider legislation dealing with motor vehicle emissions, Mr. Speaker. Consider also legislation such as the Aeronautics Act, and legislation affecting shipping and emissions from steamers. Consider the Railway Act. Under all these acts, anti-pollution regulations have been passed. I could cite a number of additional acts. I am not disputing the validity of these acts, I am merely saying that the regulations, under these various acts, that deal with pollution ought certainly to be the responsibility of and under the control of the minister of the environment. Unless there is this over-all and co-ordinated attack on the problem, I am afraid we shall get into some real trouble.

There is another weakness in the bill, Mr. Speaker. There is no mention of funds. You know, if we are to solve the problem of air pollution, water pollution or any other form of pollution, we must make available tremendous amounts of credit to municipalities, provinces or to other organizations which are to attack the problem. I wish to make it clear that in this legislation, as in other similar types of legislation which have come before the House, there is lots of talk but we are not told where the money is to come from to do the job which must be done within the next two years. We cannot delay any longer.

My time is drifting along, Mr. Speaker. I wish to deal with several other clauses of the bill. In particular, I wish to deal with clause 7. I know that in the committee we shall deal with the bill clause by clause, yet may I draw to the attention of hon. members this particular clause? It purports to set up national emission standards. I am in favour of national emission standards; there is nothing wrong with them. I submit that if one studies the wording of the clause, one will find it somewhat revealing. It reads:

7. (1) Where the emission into the ambient air of an air contaminant in the quantities and concentrations in which it is consumed or produced in the operation of stationary sources of a particular class or classes specified by the Governor in Council would

And then follow certain conditions with respect to national emission standards.

- (a) constitute a significant danger to the health of persons, or
- (b) be likely to result in the violation of a term or terms of any international obligation...

So, unless I am mistaken, national emission standards under the legislation are to apply if the emission becomes

a health hazard, or if it violates some international obligation. May I point out that there are other facets to the pollution problem to which emission standards should also apply. How about property damage? Does this clause cover property damage? The act refers vaguely to those emission standards and to how those emission standards are to be established. Apparently one of the criterions on which such standards are to be based is the wording, "...constitute a significant danger to the health of persons." The emission may cause a little bit of discomfort; it may cause a little bit of nausea but, as I read it, that emission will not be covered by the law. The emission might irritate the skin but, unless it constitutes a significant danger to the health of an individual, it will not be included. I hope I am wrong. I hope that the minister or whoever may speak on his behalf later will clarify that point.

● (3:00 p.m.)

I want to say this: the people of Canada are sick and tired of having their environment polluted by noxious fumes, by smog and other pollutants. You can damage individuals without greatly affecting their health, you know. I frankly admit that the damage to health is of primary importance. The clause says that the danger must be a significant danger. Who will determine at what point there is significant danger? There is no definition here which adequately covers the point, though an attempt has been made. One could drive a horse and carriage through this clause, yet I am talking about one of the key clauses of the bill, the one which deals with national emission standards. I am more than worried as I check this clause. I sincerely hope there will be serious consideration by the government of all these points before the debate is concluded.

I now turn to clause 8. There are to be national emission guidelines. The minister has made it clear that the guidelines which will be set may eventually become enforceable. If it is felt that higher objectives are needed, I cannot take exception to this approach. However, Rome was not built in a day, and air pollution will not be cleaned up in a day. But I want to make it crystal clear that these national emission guidelines are not enforceable and there is nothing here which will make them binding upon provincial governments or municipalities which are suffering pollution. I hope the municipalities will take cognizance of these standards and will eventually accept them.

Time is drifting along and there is another clause or two with which I should like to deal. One point was made clear by the minister in his speech. It has to do with fuels. Provision is made in the bill, and I think it is a good move, to place responsibility for the inspection of fuels with the new department. This will be an excellent way of preventing pollution before it starts. An indication has been given that standards will be set to make sure that oil does not contain too much sulphur, for example, or that the type of coal which may be used in a thermal plant does not have a sulphur content high enough to cause serious air pollution.