

*Nuclear Liability*

bill will never, never be used. And to insure that, Mr. Speaker, we must take a twofold approach to nuclear safety in Canada. This bill represents the second approach; the necessary but second approach. The first approach must be the most rigorous and vigilantly applied standards of operation, transit, and administration of our nuclear installations. Human safety of employees and the general public must be our primary concern. Only in this way will we ever realize my present hope that the provisions of this bill will never be used.

**Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, our party does not wish to impede the progress of this bill to committee, where it will receive further consideration. May I point out in my introductory remarks that this bill, which was originally presented to the Liberal caucus as the nuclear hazards bill has now been brought in under the more comforting title of nuclear liability bill. I presume it was thus not as likely to frighten anybody. The parliamentary secretary attempted to play down the horror of a nuclear holocaust. In any event this bill, I feel, is enlightened in that it recognizes the growing use of fissionable material in Canada in industry, agriculture and medicine. We can expect the use of such material to grow in future. It will be a possible source of electrical energy. This, on one hand, may bring about improvements to our ecology but, on the other, harm our ecology. Possibly, the building of nuclear plants will make unnecessary large hydroelectric dams which block our rivers and desecrate large and beautiful valleys in different parts of rural Canada. Alternatively, the nuclear installations may raise the water temperature and, although that temperature may be adjusted only a few degrees by using river water to cool the plants, the whole spawning process of anadromous fish may be disrupted.

The bill looks forward to the time when nuclear power plants will drive ships, aeroplanes and perhaps even cars. It attempts to provide some measure of insurance protection against nuclear leaks or the failure of operators of nuclear installations to protect the public generally. From that point of view, the bill certainly is worth while.

I notice however, that under the definition of radioactive waste products, products to be used in medicine, agriculture and in commercial products are excluded from the provisions of the bill. I am disturbed by this omission. We are constantly learning that material we once thought to be non-toxic is toxic

[Mr. Comeau.]

because of its cumulative effect. It is possible that the thousands of different and complex chemicals which are being put into our environment every day may, in the long run, cause us damage that, in the first instance, is not readily apparent. Certain chemicals, as is well known, build up in the body over a considerable period of time.

• (2:30 p.m.)

Consider problems associated with the uses of the drug thalidomide, pest control agents DDT and compounds of mercury, the latter being used on the prairies. These chemicals which formerly we thought were safe to use we now know, as the result of several years of experience, are not safe at all. I think the same thing might be said about nuclear material which will be used in medicine, agriculture and other parts of industry which we may not now feel has any toxicity but may, because of their build-up, lead to all kinds of horrors that at the moment we hesitate to contemplate. I think the public recognizes the horror of nuclear explosives. All over the world ban-the-bomb groups have marched to show their concern for the future of humanity. We are not dealing with some plaything when we are dealing with nuclear energy. But until recently only minor concern has been expressed over the threat to human survival on this planet if we fail to introduce bold anti-pollution measures. This is why I tend to be over-emphasizing my concern, so that it will be blatantly clear to anyone who will listen and read about this matter that the public is becoming alarmed at the dangers to its very survival.

Scientists tell us that we have just about one generation left to make a choice between a balanced ecology and disaster. Whether it is pollution disaster or nuclear disaster, it is really a Hobson's choice and the results will be the same. Since the public is becoming more aware and alarmed, it is getting to the point where a consensus is developing which will support strong and bold measures to protect the future existence of life on this planet.

I think there have been great and justifiable outcries about the underground testing of nuclear weapons, certainly over the testing in Amchitka in the Aleutian Islands last year. The proposed tests have raised considerable public concern not only in Canada, but in the United States, Japan and other parts of the world. Conservation groups are concerned as are seismologists about earthquakes. Even Governor Egan has expressed opposition to