

Supply

which most of us are guilty—I would not exculpate myself—which makes us look not at the appropriateness of corrective measures but at where the legal responsibility for corrective action lies.

I feel that the House would do well to take to heart the words of my colleague, the Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie), when he spoke of the moral imperatives of such a situation and the moral considerations which should be borne in mind when addressing ourselves to such an occurrence and to the underlying causes, the lack of regulations or legislation to ensure adequate protective measures.

The spill, having happened over a week ago now, still leaves many outstanding environmental issues. There is the question of whether the sealing which has been applied to the road surface will be effective and whether it will prevent the leaching upwards of PCB contaminated oil. There is also the question of whether that oil may not also leak downwards through the granular sub-base of the road and thus run the risk of contaminated water courses and ground water. There is the risk to human health, which I am sure the parliamentary Secretary to the Minister (Mr. Gurbin) did not wish to downplay overly. Let me quote from the *McGraw-Hill Encyclopaedia of Science and Technology*. In the Japanese case there have been deaths attributed, though perhaps not completely attributable, to acute PCB poisoning. Polychlorinated biphenyls are contaminated, as indeed many complex chemical products are contaminated, with byproducts that occur in the manufacturing process. In this case it is polychlorodibenzofuran and polybrominated biphenyls which may be responsible for the effects that have been noted in the Japanese case.

● (1740)

I would not wish to over-dramatize the Kenora situation. That would be to do a disservice to the residents and tourists of our area. Even the symptoms of people who have had the most acute exposure obviously do not compare in intensity and frequency with those of people who have been eating rice contaminated with PCBs over a period of several weeks.

The question of human health is a serious one. I think it is now being appropriately addressed by the message being pounded in through the media for people to go and see the doctor if they are in any doubt about the symptoms they may be experiencing.

There are other outstanding issues, such as the integrity and the cleanliness of the environment which is so precious to us in northwestern Ontario. Perhaps the cleanliness of that environment is the leading one. I would call on the provincial and federal Governments, when they sort out the appropriate responsibilities, to institute a monitoring sampling and testing program at the roadside of the contaminated portion of the highway. I would hope that they do this over a period of years and even decades and make sure that samples are taken to determine whether the PCB-contaminated oil is leaching out.

I would like to see the truck which is presently in Kenora still leaking PCBs moved to a place of safety. I would like to see the commitment to clean up carried through right to its

logical conclusion so that all contaminated areas and materials used in the clean-up can be safely disposed of.

I would make reference to a situation that is similar in southern Ontario. I quote the provincial Leader of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Bob Rae, saying that an investigation is needed to discover why it took the Government more than a year to act after discovering the firm of Chem-King was storing PCBs without a permit. If PCBs are being stored without a permit in southern Ontario, in how many other locations are they being stored? If they are being stored illegally, they might be moved illegally, thus putting the environment at further hazard.

The thought of PCBs contaminating the environment leads me to another theme that I have been contemplating over past days, and indeed for a longer period, namely the cumulative effects of the wide array of chemicals used in so many manufacturing processes, in so many materials, and even in food, on ourselves, our children, and our children's children. We live in what is literally a chemical world. It is said that since the end of the Second World War the number of chemicals in common use industrially have quadrupled. PCBs are just one example of a wide range of contaminants being absorbed into the food chain, which they will if they leak into the lakes in the Kenora area, and then be absorbed into our own bodies. The combination and permutation of this may have effects of multiplying exponentially the toxicity of any individual agents by combine the effect on people, animals, crops, plants and on the environment. We have a growing incidence of hypersensitivity to chemical products, chemical contaminants in the environment, indeed not only to contaminants, but to products that previously were not known allergens.

There are centres in the United States which unfortunately have no real parallel in Canada for the testing and analysis of people who have built up this extreme sensitivity, sometimes over a period of decades, and who in many cases cannot now live normal lives because of it. If there is a lesson to be learned from the Kenora spill, it should be put on the record in this House. I would like to offer my own modest ideas.

I do think there exists at the federal level a real need for co-ordination and for discussion with the provinces of an over-all waste management strategy for this country. Let us not forget that those products that are perceived to be safe today, acetylsalicylic acid, for example, may be found tomorrow to have very significant health risks to them. We have to have some form of social costing mechanism in Canada so that no company producing, as a main product, a byproduct, or a waste product, can be allowed to dispose of it without some form of approval. There has to be some knowledge, some calculus that will let us know whether we are building future Love Canals that will come back to haunt us at immense cost, not only socially but also in terms of dollars and human health.

Research has to be expanded, not curtailed. There has to be a comprehensive registration and evaluation system for new chemical products and processes before they are put into commercial production and not after.