

*Private Members' Business*

chain combine one with another. What is the cumulative effect, the cascading effect, of more and more of these being added.

Given the fact that over 5 billion of us humans not to mention hundreds of billions of other animal and life forms are taking nourishment in various ways throughout every single day, there is no question but that this topic is one of central importance and in some respects relates to survival, because nourishment is what sustains life in all its forms.

I was glad to hear him take a thoughtful and essentially non-partisan approach in bringing this subject to the floor of the House this afternoon. I can, I guess, overlook a couple of areas where bias got into his remarks, where he felt he had to condemn the government and also take a side-swipe at the Americans and the free trade agreement.

I only want to say that I think Canadians expect parliamentarians to deal with issues of the environment in a way that is beyond partisan politics. There are certainly times and issues on which there will be differences in party opinion, differences of ideology, but in effect we have something here that, like several other issues in our country and at the international level, really are of transcending importance. Most Canadians that I know do not care what a party platform is or what a personal partisan drive is on an environmental issue. They want to hear answers that are concrete and specific.

To do that, I would first like to elaborate on the hon. member's plea to the government for a more public process and begin by referring to action that is now under way this year in the formation of the Federal Pesticide Registration Review Team.

This document which relates to the current activities of this Pesticide Registration Review Team has three points in it that I would like to mention fairly briefly. The first has to do with who are the members of this team. There are representatives from consumer groups, environmental groups, the farming community, labour, public health, biological, federal regulatory agencies, the forestry sector and the pesticide industry. It is a completely balanced, comprehensive and representative

team of people to be involved in any review of pesticide use and registration in Canada.

The second point relates to a statement of purpose of this body. It is very brief, admirably expressed in one sentence, as follows:

Recognizing the principles of sustainability, the purpose of the Review Team is to formulate recommendations for the Minister of Agriculture to adapt the Pesticide Registration process to changing policies and conditions with a view to ensuring the efficient federal regulation of pest control products that minimize the risk of harm to human health and the environment while meeting the needs of the stakeholders.

The third point that I would like to extract from this document for the purposes of the debate this afternoon is to note that as a result of their very first meeting earlier this year—this group continues to meet actively—20 separate issues were identified as constituting their initial focus. We are beyond the stage here of dealing with general statements or good intentions. We are down to dealing with very specific aspects of Canadian policy dealing with pesticides.

The issues include having a clear and central focus on where the federal decision-making authority for regulating pesticides is located; the extent and cause of backlogs in registering new products; the effectiveness of the existing Minor Use of Pesticides Program; the role of risk management principles in making regulatory decisions; the role of the public in the registration process.

Others include the co-ordination and co-operation with the provinces; co-ordination and co-operation between Canada and the United States; co-ordination of pest control products regulations with the important new legislation, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System; enforcement program and penalty provisions; research permits; labelling; an ongoing review mechanism to ensure that the regulatory process can adapt quickly and fairly to changing needs and conditions. So it goes.

I am not reading all of this into the record but I did want to take the occasion to raise that for the consideration of members, particularly the member whose motion is before the House now, to indicate that this is not something that is new. This is not something that has caught the government by surprise, it is an issue that has for years been of central importance to Canadians, including previous governments. That is why Canada has had very strict and high standards relating to food, to consumer labelling, to ingredient identification. There is a separate issue that is somewhat related to this subject. We currently have a problem in Canada, and I believe