

*Environmental Pollution*

human environmental studies. The proposed activities of this institute would relate to tolerance levels and the effect on the general well-being of the human species. I take this to refer to all humans, but to Canadians in particular, and to air, soil, water and noise pollution in our environment.

First, I should like to deal briefly with the subject of pollution control agencies and the responsibilities and efforts of my government in the all-out fight against pollution of our environment. The hon. member for Malpeque will recall that the need for urgent, assertive federal action was outlined in the Speech from the Throne on October 9, 1970. It proposed the establishment of a new department of the environment which would be responsible for the principal government activities relation to environmental quality in general and pollution in particular.

I might add that legislation was introduced in this House before Christmas to provide for the establishment of this new department which would have the principal tools with which to lead the fight against pollution of all kinds and to help co-ordinate the efforts of others. At or about the same time, the Science Council of Canada presented its ninth report which it aptly entitled "This Land is Their Land". In the introduction of the report we find this passage:

Fish and wildlife are important in Canada's future. As resources of economic value, they will contribute significantly to the national income of Canada. As vertebrate animals, they are man's closest biological relatives, which brings a feeling of kinship and affection for them. As barometers of environment, they will reflect the virtues and evils of good and bad management of air, land and water resources. The interdependence of human and animal populations and the mutual need for appropriately rewarding places to carry on their daily lives require consideration of fish and wildlife populations in the context of the environment aspired to by mankind. Thus, for economic, social and aesthetic reasons, the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife are synonymous with the development of our environment.

In this spirit, a stable and healthy environment of high ecological quality, maintained over the long term, should be defined as a new national goal.

Co-operation with our provincial governments is essential to effectively carry out the fight against pollution of our environment under the responsibility of the new department and for the enhancement of our quality of life in general. This fight against pollution is far beyond the capacity of one minister and his department. It cannot even be effectively waged by the federal government alone, by provinces individually or even just by Canada: the fight must be waged by all departments of all governments and all people of all nations. In setting up this new department the government is determined to seek and obtain the present and future co-operation of all provincial departments and agencies concerned with pollution and the quality of life in general. There are actually too many pollution control agencies working independently of each other at the present time. Sometimes their individual goals and standards vary too much.

The necessity of dealing with many independent agencies can lead to conflict and confusion. The setting up of an institute of human environmental studies, therefore, would add to the confusion involved in dealing with

more agencies. In addition, one must remember that the responsibility in respect of the enhancement of the quality of our environment is a responsibility of the government and not of a separate institute. However, in co-ordinating the efforts of government in pollution control there may be a need for a national environmental council which would look at the international as well as the national scene. Such a council could anticipate problems of a technical nature and warn us against unnecessary trade-offs between cost-cutting industry on the one hand and the protection of all kinds of life on the other.

This government already has the National Economic Council which tells us what the economic trends are. It suggests broad policies to deal with these trends. A national environmental council, looking with particular concern at our living resources, could do likewise. Furthermore, the following was specifically recommended by the Science Council of Canada in its October Report:

The achievement of specific goals in fisheries and wildlife is completely dependent on the existence of national goals which reflect a strong component of environmental awareness. In large measure, all other aspects of fisheries and wildlife science are subordinate to this central theme. In consequence, a major step in planning for the future would be the creation of a non-political organization sponsored by the government which would have, as its basic role, the provision to the public of facts about their environment, upon which they may base adequate value judgments.

The cost of sacrificing even immediate material welfare for a quality environment may not be high, but if it is, Canadians deserve to have the facts and the chance to make their choice.

The structure of the organization is a prerogative of the government; however, an independent Crown corporation, with a directorate representative of environmental interests and a small professional staff, is suggested. A suitable name for such an organization might be the Environmental Council of Canada.

• (4:30 p.m.)

At the constitutional conference held on September 14 and 15 of 1970, the subject of environmental management was considered and the problem of pollution of our environment was identified as one of the most pressing and serious issues facing the people and governments of Canada today, and one that will assume increasing dimensions in the future. It was made clear by the first ministers during these constitutional discussions on the problems of environmental management that the federal and provincial governments would continue to act co-operatively and to implement co-ordinated programs of environmental management under the present constitutional arrangements.

In addition, the Canadian Council of Resource Ministers agreed that the development of common approaches to environmental management depends on good communication and a substantial body of common ground understanding. It is important that in addition to an intergovernmental forum there should be an interchange of ideas among senior personnel of all governments. It was recommended that the council make arrangements for a working conference for the purpose of obtaining a full-scale exploration of problems of the environment, to determine the components, the alternatives available and their implications. With all the federal activity in human environmental studies and the pollution control of our

[Mr. Corbin.]