

activities. This department as set up is not intended to have any voice or control over those other government departments whose activities might have ramifications in the environment.

This must be crystal clear to all members of this House. If it did have this power, there is no doubt that there would be major friction between the minister for this proposed new department and every other department of government. I firmly believe that any authority dealing with our environment should not hold direct responsibility for a particular resource portfolio. Ministers who are responsible for fisheries, forestry, northern development, mining, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, etc., have vested interests in pursuing activities most advantageous to their specific areas. It seems to me that a national environmental authority should be able to stand above the narrower concepts in order to judge the effects of all potentially relevant human activity.

There is absolutely no doubt that responsibility for any particular resource based industry might conflict with the responsibility to protect the environment from damage. Two good examples are to be found in the production of energy generated from hydro sources and in agriculture, where there is need to protect crops, even by the use of pesticides, which could cause major soil pollution and might in the long term have to be banned.

There are a number of alternatives to handling the environmental problems through this new department. We could set up a genuine department of environment with no direct responsibility for any particular resource portfolio. This department could be formed to take responsibility for coalescing and enforcing all current environmental control legislation. It could set and police national standards. It is absolutely essential that some move be made to correlate and enforce current laws. There is no indication that this will be done in the present legislation. For example, the new minister is not going to enforce the pollution regulations administered by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This new department could be given the task of scrutinizing all activities in the country for their potential environmental impact. In this respect, adequate surveys on resource development projects would be undertaken before these projects were allowed to proceed. In this way adequate safeguards would be set up to protect and conserve our Canadian heritage.

• (5:10 p.m.)

A good example might be in the field of hydro. Here, full and adequate surveys would indicate the feasibility of the project and the damage which might result to other aspects of our environment. I might add, this type of survey was desperately needed to measure the potential effects which the building of the Bennett Dam might have had on the vast Mackenzie Delta. There was no department charged with this responsibility at that time. There was no department to insist on this type of a survey, and there is nothing in the current legislation to indicate that this situation has been remedied.

The department should be asked to provide positive reclamation programs for those parts of the environment which have already suffered damage. Here again, we

could pick up numerous examples where positive reclamation is required. One of the largest and most important of these examples is to be found in the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence river systems, although there are dozens of reclamation projects needed in every part of the country.

The department should be given the power to develop a population policy for Canada. Many people consider that Canada is vastly underdeveloped, but population policies for Canada and the world will be one of the future keys to solving major pollution problems.

If the setting up of a department of environment such as I have outlined does not meet with the approval of the government, then perhaps the government would consider creating an Environmental Council of Canada. You might say these two suggested organizations would be somewhat similar, but one would have more power than the other. This Environmental Council would be similar to the National Pollution Control Commission which our party advocated when we were dealing with the Canada Water Act. The creation of an Environmental Council of Canada was recommended to the government by the Science Council of Canada. It should be a non-political organization sponsored by the government. Its basic role would be the provision to the public of facts about their environment upon which they would be able to base adequate value judgments. It is absolutely essential that the general public be given the cost in material welfare of providing a quality environment.

Canadians must have these facts, and they must be given a chance to make a choice once these facts are made known to them. This Environmental Council of Canada could be an independent Crown corporation with a directorate representative of environmental interests, with a small professional staff. It would conduct and publish the studies and forecasts of environmental problems in Canada. It could make analytical reviews of environmental questions which are the subject of public interest. It would, in effect, become the major source of informed opinion on environmental problems in our nation.

The council could be a valuable advisor to the government, if the government decided not to set up a separate department. It could stimulate particular ministers to an appreciation of the inter-relationship between resource uses and the necessity for considering problems in a larger context. It should draw attention to gaps in the support of environmentally oriented research. It should provide the inspiration and leverage for new kinds of activities in government departments. We have similar councils in Canada today. One is the Economic Council of Canada, which advises the government on economic problems. It publishes a report which is available to all individuals and groups in Canada. This report outlines the real economic problems facing the nation. Perhaps an environmental council of Canada, set up along similar lines, might also be able to provide Canadians with effective guidance on environmental problems. I bring this to the attention of the minister because I realize that the government is not too keen on setting up a new depart-