

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Dr. Philip Jones of the University of Toronto has now given us details of Formula N, which to the best of my knowledge is the only non-phosphate detergent in existence. Sweden has a detergent of this type, but it has 8 per cent phosphate content in it. Formula N is absolutely phosphate free and is non-polluting. Further, it cleans as well as the phosphate kind, and in many kinds of washing cleans better. It has been tried out by a group of Toronto housewives over a period of three months. I believe it was also tried out experimentally on Saturday last by a number of people in a laundromat, with the same result. In the third place, it takes only half as much detergent as the regular phosphate type to do a wash. In the fourth place, according to Dr. Jones it can be manufactured much more cheaply.

The present problem is not for the Research Council to initiate an emergency program to find a non-phosphate, non-polluting detergent, because we have it. As Dr. Jones has made clear, research must be kept up and this product improved, if possible, by continued research. There are two steps which should be taken by the government now. First of all, detergents containing phosphates should be banned at the earliest possible moment. The minister has said that he will aim for a complete ban by 1972 and will phase it out in several stages, that he will make amendments to the Canada Water Act in this direction, and that he now has the agreement of the provinces to proceed with an amendment to the Criminal Code.

● (10:00 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I should like to see this timetable speeded up. The phasing-out could be achieved more quickly, now that there is an alternative available. Banning detergents containing phosphates is the first thing. The second is the government's responsibility to get Formula N on the market as quickly as possible in order to avoid a serious cause of pollution.

We have Crown corporations to handle a great many things that private enterprise cannot handle adequately. We have had great success with Polymer. In this House we set up a fresh fish marketing corporation, the uranium corporation, and there is Devco which has made a success of the steel industry in Sydney. If the detergent companies are too slow about getting this new non-phosphate

detergent onto the market, I cannot see why the government should not set up a Crown corporation to make it available to concerned consumers across the country. If other companies come along later, then the government is already providing healthy competition to try and save our waterways.

There should be an immediate regulation to enforce upon manufacturers the need for listing the phosphate content on existing detergent packages. "Pollution Probe" and "STOP" have done a wonderful job in publishing the phosphate content of detergents presently on the market, but I do not think that should keep the government from its responsibility of insisting that the contents be listed on detergent packages or other containers for cleansing agents. The consumers of this country are not fooling about wanting to see phosphate detergents wiped out. They are tremendously concerned and worried about the damage occurring daily to our streams and waterways.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge that these steps be taken with the least possible delay: first of all, the banning of detergents; second, getting this new non-phosphate detergent on the market; and third, pending that, requiring manufacturers to list phosphate content on detergent packages and containers.

Mr. R. J. Orange (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I could not help but be impressed with the hon. lady's suggestion that the government get into the business of manufacturing soap. I can almost see the first annual report of the new government soap company with the title, "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles".

The hon. lady suggested that the government somehow or other get into the problem of marketing Formula N. Obviously, the hon. lady watched the television program "W5" last evening when a professor of the University of Toronto gave his ideas and suggestions which may or may not be good and may or may not be bad.

I think we have to look at the basic problem which is: How do we get rid of phosphates in our detergents? Tomorrow representatives of the detergent companies will be meeting with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene) to talk with him about the edict which he handed down last week to the companies. It does not