

not to interfere. However, the case which I am making is that the delegation of that responsibility should be reviewed.

Obviously, there are elements of the spill to which the federal Government has responded. It has been involved. But it is a question of the timing of that involvement. There was a protective direction issued by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) last Friday, and the regulations are to come into effect on July 1. They are gazetted and, therefore, public information. Why does he not ask the relevant industries to obey the regulations voluntarily from now until July 1? Why must we wait until there is a legal reason to do something? Why can there not be a moral reason for doing things? We heard earlier today, what we heard all the time from Prime Minister Trudeau, when we were told that the Government was not breaking any laws. But we ought not to think only on a legal basis, we ought to think about what is right.

I was disturbed earlier today when I heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) argue that the contract had been let to the brother-in-law of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) before the new guidelines had come into effect. If they knew that new and better guidelines were coming into effect, why did they do what they would prohibit two months in the future? That is the same kind of legalistic and rigid thinking which we got so often from the former Prime Minister. I thought we were rid of that, but we got more of it today.

I would like to say to the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor), with respect to his point about delegation, that it is a point which is well taken.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) a question about the action of the former Minister of Transport, Mr. Winters. That decision was made some 23 years ago when there was no concern about the transportation of dangerous goods. We are now in an entirely new regime. Does my colleague not agree that if the provinces want to have reciprocal agreements on load limits, speed limits and the size of vehicles, that that is fair? Does he not also agree that the jurisdiction of the national Government, under the Constitution, with respect to transportation of dangerous goods, both interprovincial and international, should remain the sole responsibility of the federal Minister of Transport and no one else?

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) has laid out very clearly the responsibility of the federal Minister of Transport. Since this incident became known to the public, we have been after the Minister of Transport to seize that responsibility. I think he has to agree, but I think he could go further.

As well, I hope that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) will take this opportunity to do some work in the area of environmental health and safety. He should take up the suggestion which we made last week and implement a medical register. What harm could be done by gathering the names of people who suspect themselves of having been exposed to this chemical and keeping track of them? It is a

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terrible thing to say, but the opportunity does not arise every day for people who may have come into contact with a hazardous substance to be enumerated. I do not know why the Minister of National Health and Welfare did not think that it was a good idea. He should send his officials into that area of the country, gather the names, and keep track of those people for the next 10, 20 or 30 years.

When we are talking about potential carcinogens, we are talking about long lead times. Therefore, when we say that there are no immediate consequences, we do not really know. That is why it is all the more reprehensible that this Government cancelled the research program into the assessment of PCBs. It was short-sighted of the Government to have cancelled four or five of those research programs, particularly the one which was requested by the Government of Ontario. It would seem to me that it was an admission on the part of the Government of Ontario that it did not know enough about this hazardous substance. That study was ongoing, but it was cut on November 8.

Mr. Holtmann: Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) accused the Ontario administration of bungling its responsibility. In fact, he is saying that it is a provincial responsibility in many cases. Just because this particular incident happened during inter-border transportation, he points his finger at the federal Government. I would just like to know if the Hon. Member feels that it was the Province of Ontario which bungled. If so, possibly there should be charges against the Province of Ontario.

• (1540)

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Hear, hear!

Mr. Keeper: Move a motion.

Mr. Holtmann: Possibly there are other things which exist right now. That's a possibility. On the other hand, what about the Province of Manitoba? If you listen to the Canadian Nature Federation, the Province of Manitoba does less than any other Canadian province to protect its environment. What is the Hon. Member's position? Does he really feel that it is a provincial responsibility? Even within the province from time to time, without going across a border, there are dangerous chemicals floating back and forth. What is the Hon. Member's position? Is it a federal responsibility or a provincial responsibility? I would like to know the Hon. Member's opinion on that.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Selkirk-Interlake (Mr. Holtmann) is starting to get the point, that charges ought to be laid against the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. I will talk about Manitoba and I will talk about the survey which was done by the Canadian Nature Federation. If one has a close look at that survey, which I did for obvious reasons, one will find that one of the ways in which it judges provinces is by deciding whether or not there is legislation on the books with respect to various environmental issues,