

A moment ago he referred to the fact that this Bill does not cover all pollutants already in the ground, on river beds, or wherever. Perhaps he should have asked himself this question when he first came to Parliament, and perhaps he should have urged his own government during all those years it was in office to introduce a measure like Bill C-74, not today but 15 or 16 years ago when he first came to this House. We all know how easy it is to criticize the Conservative Government, indeed it has become a habit. But why do they rake the Conservative Government over the coals? Because it dares take action. It is not afraid to consult Canadians on contentious issues, and the environment happens to be one of them.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to this House about my concern for the potential effects of toxic chemicals on the environment and on present and future generations of Canadians. Unlike my Liberal friends I am concerned about the people who will soon be replacing us. Over the past several years, we have all had numerous opportunities to witness the kinds of mayhem that can result from the use of a wide range of chemical products. Past toxic waste disposal practices were inadequate and have resulted in the release of toxic contaminants to surface and ground waters, threatening the supplies of drinking water for millions of people. We have realized that acid rain can wreak havoc with our lakes and forests and Canada is taking action to minimize these effects. However, we are now just awakening to the prospect that toxic chemicals may also be transported over long distances through the atmosphere and can harm humans, animals and fish.

I believe that the time is right for this government to show leadership in tackling the problem of toxic chemicals management. We need a national approach—one that respects the interests and responsibilities of all levels of government, and all sectors of our society. We must prevent problems rather than react to them. We must learn to live with chemicals from the point that they are created in the laboratory, through their introduction to the market-place and our homes, and to see that adequate disposal practices are followed. It is only through such measures, Mr. Speaker that we can sustain the health of our population and the quality of our environment and, as a consequence, the economic viability of our place in the world market.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act that we are discussing today, is the result of over 3 years of deliberations with all sectors of Canadian society. I want the Liberal Members to know that we have had consultations. It reflects the concern of this government for the potential effects of toxic chemicals on the environment and on present and future generations of Canadians. This legislation is the result of two consultative exercises than began in 1985. The first initiative began in February 1985 when the Ministers of the Environment and of National Health and Welfare released for public review and comment, proposals for amendments to the Environmental Contaminants Act.

In response to the comments received during this public review period, the Ministers established in June 1985 a

Consultative Committee with twelve representatives drawn from business, labour, public interest groups, and federal and provincial governments. It was not a habit of our predecessors to seek the advice of provincial governments. The committee was taken with reviewing the original government proposals and the submissions received during the public comments period, and recommending proposed amendments to the Ministers. The Committee met for the first time in September 1985 and, after a series of meetings and considerable study, submitted a final report to the Ministers on August 29, 1986. In this report, the committee made a series of recommendations to increase the scope of the Environmental Contaminants Act and to strengthen the role of the Federal Government in dealing with the problems of toxic chemicals.

The Second initiative began in September 1985 when a second consultative group started to address the problems associated with the management of all aspects of toxic chemicals in order to minimize risks to human health.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that I will have to continue after the lunch break.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 2 o'clock.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 21

[Translation]

WOMEN

SEXUAL ABUSE

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, a Manotick physician has been cleared of sexual assault charges concerning a 21-year-old female patient in the emergency ward of his hospital.

Anyone making a study of recent publications on the subject will discover that the veil of silence on this taboo—physicians sexually abusing their female patients—is being raised.

In the case of the patient from Perth, an attempt was made to show that, far from calming her, the Valium prescribed by her physician had been the source of a libidinous perception.

Mr. Speaker, since when is Valium a stimulant, given the fact that evidence gathered over a number of years proves that the depressive conditions of many women can be traced back to this drug?

Allow me to question the soundness of comments on Valium. Even the judge has stated that he still entertains reasonable doubts in his mind.