

In the relatively short time since we in the United States began awakening to the threat of environmental contamination, we have been able to reach only a broad and tentative understanding of its nature and effects on man. Our present knowledge suggests that the many contaminants to which we are all exposed threaten our health and welfare in many devious and subtle ways. To judge the full magnitude and seriousness of the problem requires a great deal more than just a superficial look at its most obvious consequences.

In many respects, our progress in understanding the problems of environmental contamination has been uneven. We have long since learned, for example, that regulations are needed to guard against the ingestion of small amounts of toxic substances in food and to insure the purity of drugs. In the area of occupational health, there is broad understanding of the need to protect workers against many of the most obvious hazards inherent in their daily job activities. But we have only begun to develop an awareness of the full implications of contamination of the environment. That we have lagged in this respect is indeed tragic, for it is contamination of the natural environment that has the greatest potential for affecting the total population, including infants and children as well as the elderly, the healthy as well as the ailing, and adults of all ages, regardless of their occupations.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has a long experience in dealing with all of the ways in which contaminants may reach man. Our experts pioneered in developing research and regulatory programs to protect the public health and welfare from food, drug and water contaminants and from a host of communicable diseases which once caused death and disability in truly tragic proportions. By identifying the interrelationships that exist among all of the various ways in which man is exposed to the toxic by-products of our technologically advanced society, the Department assesses the overall dimensions of the threat posed by environmental pollution. Mr. Chairman, this is very important, because an adequate air pollution control program must take into consideration the other vectors of disease and disability which compound its effects.

I said a few moments ago that we have just begun to recognize that man's ability to contaminate his environment has long since surpassed the essentially limited capacity of our environment to purge itself of such contamination. I submit that the Clean Air Act of 1963 and its Amendments of 1965, and the beginning we have made toward implementation of this Congressional mandate are firm evidence that this recognition is real and concrete. The several approaches toward control of the problem in which we are now engaged—research and training activities, financial and technical assistance to State and local control agencies, and direct Federal abatement action on problems beyond the reach of other levels of government—offer a sound foundation on which future improvements can be built. That we must, all of us, seek improvements is a point on which there can be no serious disagreement. The forces of growth and change which leave in their wake problems of environmental contamination continue to accelerate with each year that passes. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is pledged to carry out the Congressional mandate for a clean and healthy environment for all Americans.

Mr. DADDARIO. Mr. MacKenzie, please come forward.

Mr. MacKENZIE. Thank you.

Mr. DADDARIO. As I understand, Mr. Stern will give the next statement.

Mr. STERN. Yes.

Mr. DADDARIO. Proceed, please.

STATEMENT OF MR. ARTHUR C. STERN, ASSISTANT CHIEF, DIVISION OF AIR POLLUTION, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Mr. STERN. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I have submitted for the record a rather lengthy statement of 78 pages and certainly I wouldn't burden you with that amount of reading. I have an abbreviated statement of 12 pages. If in your time schedule this