

Environmental

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Government Ignores MRAK Commission

by Vic Kley

American industries are manufacturing and distributing chemicals capable of producing cancer and birth defects in animals. The HEW-sponsored Mrak Commission, reported several dangerous substances to HEW Secretary Robert Finch late in 1969. The report was also filed with the USDA, the FDA and the White House.

One of the substances mentioned, 2, 4, 5-T, is a powerful herbicide developed under biological warfare programs during the Second World War. It has been widely used within the United States to defoliate along highways and railroad rights-of-way and is extensively employed in South Vietnam. Lee Du Bridge, science advisor to President Nixon, called for a ban on the use of 2, 4, 5-T in this country by January 1, 1970, pending further investigation. At this date the registration of 2, 4, 5-T has not been cancelled by the USDA.

The portion of the Mrak Report which condemned 2,4,5-T also cited another chemical, PCNB (pentachloronitrobenzene). The report concluded that both substances produce "sufficiently prominent effects of a seriously hazardous nature to lead us to categorize it as probably dangerous." Unlike 2,4,5-T, PCNB is used extensively on foodstuffs.

PCNB, primarily a fungicide, is a product of Olin Matheson. In laboratory studies made by the Bionetics Research Labs of Litton Industries (under contract to the National Cancer Institute) PCNB was found to produce tumors of the liver, lung and lymphoid organs in mice. Further study into its teratogenic properties disclosed that PCNB produced such birth defects in mice as missing kidneys, cleft palates, and single or malformed eyes. Overall weight gain and liver enlargement were observed in the mothers. Olin's pesticide division in Little Rock, Arkansas, refuses to reveal how much PCNB is manufactured and sold, although they did indicate that the quantity exceeds 5,000,000 pounds per year. Olin's representative stated that over 3 million acres of cotton and 1/2 million acres of peanuts were treated with PCNB in Texas and Arkansas alone. CHEMICAL WEEK (April 26, 1969) describes the use of PCNB as a fungicide on cotton, crucifers, potatoes, lettuce, peanuts, wheat, beans, tomatoes, peppers and ornamentals.

In an interview with a representative of the USDA's division of pesticide registration, it was discovered that PCNB was not yet under restriction. The USDA spokesman was unaware of any action contemplated by the USDA re-

garding the chemical, PCNB is used in the form of wettable powder, emulsifiable concentrate, and dust.

In addition to 2,4,5-T and PCNB, the Mrak report recommended that several other pesticides, all shown to be toxic to the unborn, should be "immediately restricted to prevent risk of human exposure." These include Carbaryl, mercurials, 2,4-D, Captan and Folpet.

Carbaryl, a product of Union Carbide sold under the trade name Sevin, caused in mice and dogs increases in cystic kidneys, skeletal deformations, cleft palates, and facial malformations. Carbaryl is sprayed and dusted on cattle, pigs, sheep, poultry, barley, oats, pecans, potatoes, rye, poultry houses and sugar cane primarily to prevent insect pests. In 1964, the last year for which estimates are available, 14,946,000 pounds of Carbaryl in the United States were produced.

Mercurials (organo mercury compounds) are used primarily as pesticides for farm and paper products. One organic mercury compound is Semasan (Hydroxymercurichlorophenol) made by DuPont and sprayed on potatoes and turf. The Mrak Commission cites studies showing eye, tail and central nervous system deformities in mice resulting from mercurial compounds. Sweden has banned organo-mercuric compounds because of their effects on both animals and wildlife, especially fish and birds. America used over 796,556 pounds of organomercuric compounds as pesticides in 1967 (PESTICIDE REVIEW, 1967).

Three compounds of 2,4-D (the butyl, isopropyl, and Isocetyl es-

Researching Pollution

How To Begin...

by Tom Sharpless

An action program must legitimize itself with hard facts. Support will come more easily to the movement if those in the movement know what they're talking about.

Fortunately, a wealth of studies on environmental pollution is available. So many people are actively engaged in studying pollution but so few are doing anything about it that the call for further research is taken as the battle cry of the opposition. Nevertheless, I argue that it is at least as important to base convictions on fact as it is to act on those convictions.

Step one is to define a problem or area of interest to you. It is most challenging if personal interest is the chief criterion. However, you may elect to decide on the basis of probable usefulness. It will be of more immediate use to us here to collect what is known of the use of herbicides in Connecticut rather than to collect what is known about the effect of hot oil pipes on the Alaskan tundra. Another criterion might be your access to information in a particular area. The following general areas for pollution study may be useful:

1. Highways) Associated loss of natural areas
2. Dams) Noise pollution
3. Airport) Associated air and water pollution
4. Fossil Fuel (oil and coal) power plants: SO₂, particulate, nitrogen oxides etc.
5. Nuclear power plants: thermal pollution, radioactive wastes
6. Industrial pollution: paper mills, mineral extractors, mines, metal plating, etc. lead, arsenic, mercury, beryllium, cadmium and manganese
7. Municipal sewage disposal
8. Municipal garbage disposal
9. Oil spills at sea
10. Farm pollution: especially pesticides, herbicides, nitrate and phosphate
11. Automobile pollution: CO, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, ozone, asbestos, rubber dust.
12. Non-recycling materials: aluminum, glass, plastics, etc.
13. Balance of nature and human population
14. Crowding and human behavior.

Many approaches are possible, of course. It may be desirable to isolate something that's being polluted, such as the Connecticut River. Or it may be beneficial to study the political channels of pollution control on, say, the state level. Once selected, the area of concern may be reduced or expanded.

The hard work will be in locating the resources and collecting useful information. We are particularly fortunate in Hartford to have resources close at hand. Having the Connecticut State offices here gives us opportunities we would be remiss to pass up. The following list of state agencies and local organizations concerned with pollution is probably not complete: State of Connecticut

Pesticide Control Board - Anthony Wallace - 165 Capitol Ave.
Water Resources Commission -

John J. Curry - 165 Capitol Ave.
- Water pollution field reports.
Air Pollution Control - Louis Proulx - 79 Elm St. Data on SO₂ and Particulates.
Health Dept. - Franklin Foote - 79 Elm St.
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Environmental Health Services - David C. Wigen - 79 Elm St. - Copies of Air Pollution Laws
Transportation Department - George J. Conkling - 24 Wolcott Hill Rd., Wethersfield
Clean Air Commission - Wm. J. Scully
Capitol Region Planning Agency - Robt. Brown - 15 Lewis St.
- Air Pollution Study, Water Treatment Study
Governor's Committee to Develop Environmental Policy for Connecticut - James G. Horsfall
- New Haven - Handbook
Metropolitan District AGENCY
Water pollution control plants - Hartford Plaza
Survey and mapping div. - Hartford Plaza - Maps
OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
Conn. Air Conservation Committee - Philip W. Woodrow (Program Director) 45 Ash St. E. Hartford
Save the Reservoir Committee - Charlotte Kitowski - West Hartford
Conn. Action Now - Dan W. Lufkin - 152 Temple St. Rm 310 New Haven 06510
Conn. River Watershed Council - Chris Percy - Greenfield, Mass.
Travelers Research Corporation - Thos. Malone - 250 Constitution Plaza - See Capitol Region Planning Agency
Becket Academy - Moodis, Conn.
Conn. River Pollution Survey - Talcott Mt. Science Center - Donald P. LaSalle - Montevideo Rd. Avon, Conn. - Ecologist (Veron Crawford)

OUT OF STATE ORGANIZATIONS
Sierra Club - 15 E. 53rd St. New York
Environmental Defense Fund - Tatchogue New York
Zero Population Growth - New York City

Special attention is directed to the Capitol Region Studies on air pollution (1967) and water treatment (1970) if these are your areas of particular concern.
Next week: Book and periodicals.

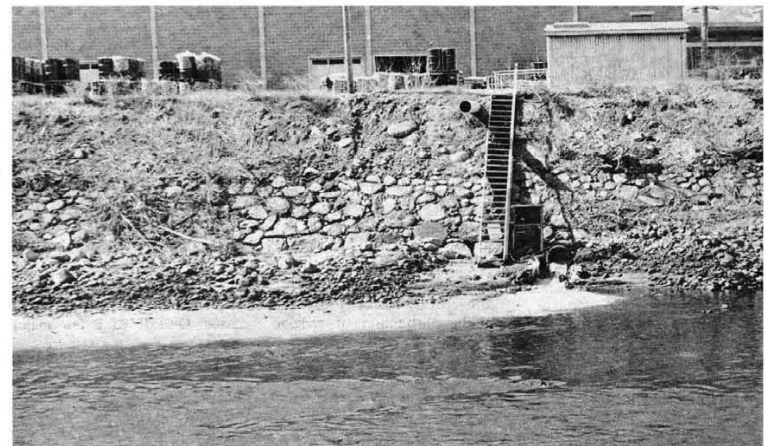
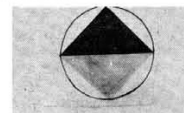
Protect Your Environment

In 1968-'69, a group of biology students at The Thomas School helped pass a bill in the Connecticut State Senate prohibiting the destruction of any wetland along the Connecticut shore line. These girls in Rowayton organized the Protect Your Environment Movement to inform and educate the public of the serious biological crisis we are facing. Since then many concerned people have organized themselves into PYE clubs all over the state. They're working on more projects in their local areas to protect and preserve their surroundings.

These clubs are trying to educate and fight against the dangers of air pollution, water pollution, loss of open space and natural resources, thermal pollution, over population, and poisonous wastes in large quantities. Their main form of publicity is a button which expresses their ideals.

Show your concern by wearing a PYE button or Earth Day button. If you are interested please phone Joan Robinson at 242-6821 or write to:

PYE CLUB
The Thomas School
40 Highland Avenue
Rowayton, Connecticut 06853
for more information.



Bill Crepeau

Naugatuck Chemical Co., Naugatuck, Ct. The large pipe on the right is the MAIN drainage pipe for waste materials. The actual color of the liquid pictured below is dirty yellow. The Naugatuck River becomes fully grayish-yellow 1/2 mile downstream and remains so until it reaches Danbury, Ct., fifteen miles downstream.

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