Mercury has been found in the sediments of the Detroit River and Lake Erie, he said, adding that "one source has suggested the effects of the pollution may last for 10 to 100 years unless the mercury is made inactive either by its physical removal or by elimination of its biological availability."

Purdy noted that dredging would be "enormously expensive," and could conceivably cause significant environmental damage including the possible additional release of mercury to the aquatic environment. He said no practical way has yet been found to chemically neutralize or bind the mercury in bottom sediments.

Among the recommendations Purdy made to Hart was one calling for a national clearinghouse to coordinate sampling, monitoring, and release of scientific findings, which would alert pollution control officials to emerging and potential problems.

Michigan Official Urges Study of PCB's & NTA in Detergents

Purdy was also concerned about polychlorinated biphenyls used in hydraulic fluids and coolants in industry that he said are being released as wastes. He asked the FWQA to initiate studies to determine the "significance of PCB's discharged into the aquatic environment."

He said he was concerned too about sodium nitrilotriacetate (NTA) in laundry products, which he said has the ability to sequester heavy metals.

FWQA's Mayo told Hart that the Lake Michigan Enforcement Conference had instructed its Pesticide Committee to develop information on the occurrence and toxicity of PCB's and his agency was in the process of launching "an in-depth research evaluation of the potential impact on the environment of the use of NTA as a major substitute for phosphates in detergents."

Purdy also revealed that Michigan is considering legislation that would require disclosure by industry of all wastes, and disclosure of all substances used in the manufacturing process.

Wyandotte and Dow officials testified to steps they have taken to prevent further mercury discharges. Hart questioned whether the companies had permits from the Corps of Engineers under an 1899 law that requires firms that discharge refuse into navigable waterways to obtain these. The firms had not.

J. J. Lankhorst, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the Chief of Engineers, agreed that these permits have been required for 71 years, but noted that it was not until 1966 when the Water Quality Act was approved that the Corps recognized this application.

C. B. Branch, Dow Executive Vice President, testified that as late as 1968 "there was no indication methyl mercury could arise from inorganic mercury or mercury under conditions existing in nature."

Hart said Nature carried an article in August 1968 suggesting the possibility of mercury conversion from the inorganic to organic form.

Branch acknowledged that the observation in the article provided the first indication that alkylation of mercury may be bacterial in origin, but he said he personally knew "of no one that picked this up as having association with industrial or municipal mercury effluents."

Branch explained that the inorganic mercury is of little consequence, but "metallurgical mercury is about 100 times the toxicity of inorganic mercury." He outlined a number of proposals that should be followed to help resolve the problems.

Last week, FDA discovered fish in waters of Western Louisiana with residues of mercury above the 0.5 p.p.m. level, and was continuing its investigation in other areas.

RECALLS: EGG NOODLES; SALAD DRESSING; FLOUR

The Food and Drug Administration's recall list last week disclosed a voluntary recall from the retail level in New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Ohio of Bravo Enriched Egg Noodles because of alleged contamination with Group B salmonella. The recall was being handled by the manufacturer, Bravo Macaroni Co., Inc., Rochester, N.Y.

Bonnie Baker Salad Dressing was being voluntarily recalled from the retail level in Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and Oklahoma because of "mycological and/or bacteriological contamination," FDA said. This recall was being handled by the manufacturer, Brundidge Foods, Inc., Brundidge, Ala.

Voluntary recalls were underway from the retail level in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa of a number of flour products because of alleged rodent filth contamination. A recall of Gold Medal All Purpose Enriched Bleached Flour was being handled by A&P Grocery Warehouse, Chicago, and a recall of Gold Medal Enriched All Purpose Bleached Pat-in-the-Pan Flour was being handled by A&P Grocery Wholesale, Chicago. The manufacturer of both products was General Mills, Inc., Avon, Iowa.

Ceresota All Purpose Flour, unbleached, enriched, was being recalled by the manufacturer, Standard Milling Co., Kansas City, Mo. Recalls of Sunnyfield Family Bleached Enriched and Self-Rising Flours were by A&P Grocery Wholesale, Chicago. Both products were manufactured by J.F. Imbs Milling Co., Mantel, Ohio.

Meanwhile, an FDA criminal prosecution based on alleged salmonella contamination of frozen whole eggs resulted in a fine of $1,000 against Rosenberg & Sons Produce Co., Gaylord, Minn. The firm pleaded guilty to the salmonella charge. Two other charges, including one that the eggs did not conform to the food standard,