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ACTION NOT WORDS

MONSANTO Chemicals, in acting to control the use of one of their products, made at the Newport works, have probably done as much for conservation in this country as all the verbiage produced during the official Conservation Year. Much lip-service has been paid to the necessity of conserving wildlife, protecting the environment and preventing pollution. But among many, support for these aims stops short if it involves financial loss or precludes increased profits. Which is why Monsanto's action is highly praiseworthy. From March 1, the firm plan to cut off supplies of one of their chemicals to customers who put it to uses they consider non-controllable.

TRACES of the chemical were found last year, in thousands of dead birds. It has not been proved that the chemical was responsible for the birds' deaths, but the company has decided on the partial ban because of the persistent nature of the chemical. While it has not been revealed what the ban will cost the company in terms of lost trade, it has been conceded that it represents a fair commercial sacrifice. The fact that a company is prepared to put the environment before profit is indeed refreshing in such a materialistic world.

THEIR ACTION could produce even more far-reaching repercussions. Monsanto have been assured by their three continental competitors that they will not attempt to step in and take the business which has been lost. And they hope to persuade the other companies to enforce a similar ban on non-controllable applications of the chemical throughout Europe. This is giving the Continent a real lead, and the firm's action should also prompt other manufacturers in this country to take similar steps if their products pose a threat to the environment. Monsanto have shown that the pound need not necessarily rule all our actions throughout our lives. This is a prime instance of actions speaking louder than words.