(1A)

Aug 3, 1971

OPENING STATEMENT FOR SENATOR SPONG

HEARINGS ON S.1478

This morning the Subcommittee on the Environment begins hearings on S.1478, the Administration's proposed Toxic Substances Control Act, and Amendment 338 to that bill which I introduced on July 27.

Senator Hart is the Chairman of the Subcommittee but for the purposes of these hearings he has relinquished the chair. I appreciate Senator Hart's gesture and I hope the quality of the hearings will not suffer unduly because of the able Chairman's absence.

In requesting additional authority to regulate toxic substances the Administration recognizes that gaps exist in our regulatory framework that permit public health and environmental hazards to occur without regulation. While I would disagree with the Administration on the best method of dealing with this problem, we are in complete agreement that these gaps should be closed.

In the course of the next three days we will hear testimony from three prominent scientists on the hazards of three chemical substances which would be prime candidates for regulation under a toxic substances control statute. Later this morning we will hear the substantial quantities of mercury are reaching the environment by way of the disposal of consumer products. While we have achieved impressive reductions in mercury discharges from industrial sources, an even greater source of mercury has yet to be controlled. Tomorrow we will

receive testimony on the dangers of PCBs including a description of the problems of rice oil contamination in Japan as it relates to the PCBs problem in this country. The need for further protection from PCBs has been accentuated by the recent discovery of contaminated chicken feed and the subsequent flare of activity caused by that discovery. On Thursday we will receive testimony concerning asbestos which is used extensively in bullding construction, brake linings and for other purposes which may be contaminating the air we breathe.

In addition, the Subcommittee will receive testimony from Administration witnesses and a number of conservation and public interest groups.

Additional hearings will be scheduled in late September or early October to hear from industry witnesses which, hopefully, will round out a complete hearing record.

Let me welcome our first witness, the Honorable Russell E. Train, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality.

MONS 090262