

Therefore, I encourage the Leader of the Government to follow up on the matter.

Senator Roblin: I take encouragement wherever I can get it. My honourable friend has expressed his opinion on this matter—he obviously wants Canada to make a statement expressing disapproval. I will certainly make that opinion known to my colleague, because I hope that the government will be able to make a statement on the matter.

CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

TRANS-BORDER POLLUTION PROBLEMS

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay: Honourable senators, two weeks ago I brought to the attention of the Leader of the Government in the Senate the concern of the people of Manitoba regarding the proposed nuclear dump south of the border between Manitoba, North Dakota and Minnesota. Consideration is still being given to the proposed dump, and the matter is causing ever greater concern. It was raised again yesterday in newspapers in Manitoba, which reported that the proposed Minnesota nuclear repository is viewed as a hostile act against a friendly neighbour. We are more concerned than ever because, as I mentioned on that occasion, such a dump would spoil the waters of the Red River and all of the fresh fish in our lakes.

Knowing that our leader is from Manitoba, I realize that he is personally aware of the problem. He sits as a member of the cabinet and is rather close to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. All of these people take part in the discussions that take place with our friends, the Americans. I request that the Leader of the Government in the Senate make a particular effort to place emphasis on this matter when he speaks about it to the Right Honourable the Prime Minister and his other colleagues so that the people of Manitoba will rest a little easier, feeling that appropriate representation is being made by the federal government. They will know that they do not have to depend solely upon the efforts of a few representatives of my province, but that our case will be put more strongly and that the results will be more to our advantage. That is my request.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, it is not only the people of Manitoba who have concern about where these nuclear dumps are located. The matter also concerns the people of New Brunswick because they are under the same threat. There are at least 30 locations in the United States which are being examined as "repositories"—if that word could be used—or dumps for these wastes. Two of those locations, in particular, are close to the Canadian frontier; one is close to New Brunswick and one is close to Manitoba. The Government of Canada is no more anxious than my honourable friend to have our territory or our people placed in jeopardy by the locations of these dumps.

We see it as a serious problem. As to what we are doing about it, first of all, it has been placed on the agenda for discussions between the Secretary of State for External Affairs

and the Secretary of State in the United States, as the court of first instance, one might say. At the same time, the Government of Canada is actively soliciting the co-operation of the provinces, which have a constitutional interest in natural resources, so that we may have a unified front as far as Canadians are concerned. It is my understanding, although I will have to confirm this, that representations have been made to the two provinces concerned to get a united policy in respect of the matter. I notice in reading the press of Manitoba, that the present government there does not seem to have thought it desirable to indicate the nature of its conversations with the federal government on the matter or, if it has, I have overlooked it. Let us hope that I have overlooked it, because I think this is one matter in which we need have no political differences.

Senator Guay: Supplementary to that, my concern, honourable senators, is the fact that the Americans have held meetings as recently as a few days ago. They call these "explanatory meetings," and this fact also creates some concern. There might well be other areas they are considering, but I believe that the two that have been mentioned—those near Manitoba and New Brunswick—are the only ones so far about which such meetings have been held. That is why we are very concerned. No doubt the Leader of the Government is aware of these meetings.

Senator Roblin: Yes, I am, honourable senators. I can say that a number of these so-called explanatory meetings are being held in the United States, one very recently in New Hampshire. The opposition of the people of New Hampshire to the whole idea was just as vehement as that which one sees in Manitoba and New Brunswick. But I want to tell my honourable friend that, if I understand the process correctly—and I think I do—it is not a matter that will be decided overnight. It will be a long time, perhaps years, before any determination is made. It is all the more important, therefore, that we should get our objections on paper and into the form of representations as soon as possible.

Hon. Charles McElman: By way of a supplementary, honourable senators, I ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate to ask his colleagues to pay particular attention to what I am sure he will appreciate is an important point. I ask that no site be even considered if its location will affect headwaters of rivers which have their origin in a state of the Union and which then drain into Canada. In the case of New Brunswick, such rivers might originate in the state of Maine. Manitoba might also have the same problem. The concern is properly being expressed in both areas of Canada. It has been shown very clearly in recent times in Ontario that no matter how deep the receptacles are placed in which chemicals or other wastes may be disposed of, they do not stay out of sight or out of mind. They have a habit of popping back as they are doing currently in the waters of Ontario. Even though it is proposed that these deep well and cavern disposal units may be between 2,000 and 4,000 feet underground in non-fractured rock, the area of which we are speaking, the border area of New Brunswick and Maine, is an area of not heavy but continuing