

Private Members' Business

I listened to the member for Hull—Aylmer who talked about the fact that in 1980 he was on the same stage as Prime Minister Trudeau. I am sure that many members of the government who are in power today were also on that same stage. He seems to forget it was his participation with that spirit and leadership that was responsible for this man not only being the force that he was as the mayor of Hull, but was also one of the reasons why he was elected to this Parliament of Canada.

The people in his riding did not elect him to work at separating this country. They elected him to come to this Chamber to work at keeping this country together. I have great difficulty in understanding where he is coming from. He talked about the fact that the day after the Meech Lake Accord went down it was the end of his life as someone who believed in Canada.

The fact of the matter is that there were many, many people, even in the province of Quebec, who believed that there were serious flaws in the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I hear the member regretting the failure of Meech Lake.

I accuse him and his colleagues of killing Meech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being five o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

HAZARDOUS WASTE

BAN ON IMPORTATION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should ban the importation of all hazardous waste.

• (1700)

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak on this timely issue on the eve of a conference which could have overwhelming implications for the future of our planet.

The motion I am introducing is a very simple motion but it flows from the work done by the Brundtland commission dealing with our common future and the work that will be examined in great detail at the conference in Rio de Janeiro. I would like to read the motion into the record:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should ban the importation of all hazardous waste.

It is a simple motion but it speaks to the issue which has gripped our nation and indeed the world for the last number of years and that is the issue of what constitutes sustainable development.

One of the messages from the Brundtland commission was clear: think globally and act locally. This particular motion enshrines the notion of local action into parliamentary law. What it says is in future industrial development and in future residential development in our country we have to be prepared to deal with our own hazardous wastes at home and likewise that other countries must feel compelled to do the same.

It is an important concept because in the world of garbage in which we live, and Canada is one of the greatest garbage-producing nations in the world, it is critical that we not only find ways of disposing of our garbage, but begin to take responsibility for our own waste. This particular motion enshrines that as a principle, specifically in dealing with the issue of hazardous waste.

[Translation]

I first introduced this motion in 1989 when we learned that Canada was importing BPC contaminated gasoline. At that time, customers had no idea that the gasoline and heating oil they were purchasing might be toxic. Farmers did not suspect that the oil used to heat their greenhouses might be toxic. I tabled the motion hurriedly in order to ban the importation of hazardous waste into Canada and to make Canadians understand that we should treat our own BPCs. It is not enough to encourage BPC exports. It is absolutely essential also that we have the means to dispose of our own waste. I had this matter slated for debate in early May last year because I knew that the situation not only had not improved but had worsened.

It is a fact that Canada remains, on the eve of the Rio de Janeiro meeting, the single largest producer of waste material in the world. Canada is the most wasteful country in the world. On the other hand, we have yet to adopt a policy requiring that, as a matter of principle, we