

Environmental Affairs

The pollution problem, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, is not strictly a municipal problem. Almost all sectors of production or services produce some pollutants biodegradable or otherwise, which should be eliminated or treated before being reintroduced into our environment. The problems arising from the disposal of waste are no less real and important. We will have to find one day some safe processes to get rid of them. I think that incineration, as recently suggested by the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, is not a valid alternative if the incinerator itself will also pollute the atmosphere.

• (1440)

We are all aware of the problem caused by acid rain and we know that it is caused in large part by atmospheric emissions. The incineration of solid waste could well turn out to be a disguised way to get rid of the problem instead of solving it.

However, those problems are not restricted to the city of Ottawa and the village of Carp. They affect all Canadians. That is why the Province of Quebec is considering the launching a huge project at a cost of \$640 million to clean up the water and curb the pollution caused by wastes such as manure and liquid manure from farming operations.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the amounts required for water purification are colossal: \$640 million in Quebec alone because of a farming problem. It is obvious that the municipalities will not be able to do the job alone, even though they have ultimate responsibility for it. What must they do? First, they have to ask the provinces for assistance, but even the provinces cannot absorb by themselves within their budget, the total cost involved which means a piecemeal approach to water purification programs.

Despite this fact, existing programs are quite substantial. For instance, in Quebec, the water purification program has a budget of \$6.6 billion.

In Ontario, the Liberal Government is also doing its share. It recently announced the Lifelines Program, which will allow the municipalities to recover part of their costs for repairing their infrastructures. The Ontario Government expects to spend between \$45 and \$50 million a year under this program beginning in 1991-92. It expects to invest a total of \$333 million in Lifelines, and as its contribution is limited to 33 per cent of the cost of projects, at least \$1 billion will be invested for this purpose in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, according to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, a very well-known and serious organization which has looked at the situation from a national perspective, some \$15 billion will be needed over the next five years. Municipal infrastructures include a great many things, such as road repairs as well as recreational and cultural facilities. This projected expenditure of \$15 billion includes all these services.

As for my motion, it deals only with the infrastructures related to water and the environment. The amounts required must therefore be broken down to determine how much will be needed for water purification, sewage treatment and storm sewer building programs.

These amounts have already been broken down and they are contained in the joint report of provincial and territorial departments and agencies responsible for municipal affairs. This report, published in 1985, is entitled *Infrastructure Needs of Canadian Municipalities 1986-1990*.

In the section dealing with Environment, water and sewer systems, we see that the expenditures involved expressed in constant dollars of 1985, on the part of municipalities and provinces will be \$1.5 billion in 1986, \$1.3 billion in 1987, \$1.3 billion in 1988, \$1.2 billion in 1989, \$1.2 billion in 1990, for a five-year total of \$6.3 billion.

On the other hand, it is estimated that the minimum investment which would be required to preserve the integrity of the current structure should reach some \$8.7 billion over the same period. There is therefore a shortfall of \$2.25 billion. These amounts which should be invested, but which will not be invested for lack of funds, will contribute to a greater deterioration of our infrastructure system.

It is recognized that this system is in poor condition and should be urgently repaired; yet, we witness a laissez-faire attitude. Without any financial assistance from the federal Government, the deterioration of these infrastructures will reach a point where it will no longer be possible to solve the problem because of the enormous amounts which would be required. The more we allow these infrastructures to deteriorate, Mr. Speaker, the more Canadian taxpayers will have to pay.

According to a study carried out by the Ontario Government before it inaugurated its *Lifelines* program, the estimated costs for updating these infrastructures would be between 30 per cent and 50 per cent lower than for their complete replacement. Reason urges us to act immediately. What does the Mulroney Government do? Again nothing, or rather, since it had to do something, it did something:

All municipalities and provinces were told to "Get lost! We are not interested in footing your bills."

It told as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, the problem of municipal infrastructures concerns us all, because it is a common problem. I hope that this debate and all the arguments we will put forward may help the Government change its mind. The problem is serious, the situation is urgent and all Canadians are concerned about it. We must realize that the problem will not go away and that the situation is serious. The Government is abandoning not only the municipalities, but all Canadians who are entitled to a quality environment and safe drinking water.