

*Supply*

release achieve when the plan has not been announced and the wording of the statement is so vague? I urge the Minister to make that plan public and end the secrecy surrounding it.

There are other passages in the press release which really defeat the logic of any objective reader, but time does not permit me to put them on the record. When there is a suggestion of a 50 per cent reduction, when toxic chemicals are referred to as "certain toxic chemicals", and when it says that the target date "may be achievable by 1995 or sooner", it is not very convincing. This accounts for the reaction of groups which have already commented in very critical terms about the announcement made in Washington.

This leads me to the performance of the Minister as a negotiator. Quite frankly, I could not believe my eyes when I read in *The Toronto Star* of May 13 that the Minister had castigated the provincial Ministry of the Environment of Ontario for trying to scuttle a proposed clean-up agreement with the U.S. by demanding what he termed "unrealistically high standards". I do not know on what basis the Minister of the Environment for Canada can describe as unrealistic the standards set by his colleague from the Province of Ontario who shares with him the political responsibility for what happens through an agreement which is being worked out. If the Minister feels that certain standards are unrealistic, he should be forthcoming and explain why, rather than going public with what he is quoted as calling a "perception". In that article the Minister is also quoted as saying:

I'm prepared to be disabused of that perception.

Have you ever seen a better example of double talk? On the eve of a meeting in Washington with his U.S. counterpart the Minister of the Environment for Canada says that the Ontario Minister of the Environment is setting unrealistic standards and, in the same breath, he is indicating his willingness to be disabused of that perception on that eve of the meeting in Washington with his U.S. counterpart. Who in his right mind as a negotiator for Canada would, on the eve of a meeting with the representative of the other party to the agreement, go public on a disagreement among Canadians? That is unacceptable.

The Minister owes the House an explanation for that kind of silly, irresponsible and incompetent performance. If there was a disagreement between him and the Minister of the Environment for Ontario he should have worked it out in private. He should never have gone public with it. He made it public knowledge that the Government of Canada is in disagreement with the position of the Government of Ontario. If you were the negotiator on the other side of the table, Mr. Speaker, you would focus on and push for the lesser of the two positions. This is why we are gradually moving toward the adoption of a second-class plan. That is not fair, it is not right, and it is not in the interests of Canada.

When speaking for Canada the Minister of the Environment should put forth the unanimity of the views of the provincial Ministers of the Environment. That is the least he can do. If there is a disagreement, he should keep it to himself. A

difference of opinion is something for Canada to resolve internally. It should not be proclaimed publicly here and in Washington to the benefit of the negotiating team on the other side of the table. I was profoundly disappointed by the Minister's action. I do not see how he can function effectively in this kind of an environment.

I am also disturbed by my impression that the Minister has not done his homework and does not understand that both Canada and the U.S. made an undertaking in the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The U.S. is not doing us a favour by abiding by the content of this agreement. The Minister of the Environment does not yet seem to have understood this. This is a binding commitment. Certain parts of this agreement now seem to be in need of review and renegotiation as urged upon us by the Royal Society of Canada, the National Research Council of the U.S., and other reputable and substantial bodies in North America.

I am sure the Minister will get up and say that this is the first agreement, and the first time, and use other such wording which he has expressed in Question Period. The Minister is building on work which was done before he came on the scene. The 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement provided a building block. The study produced in November of 1984 by the Niagara River Toxic Committee is another building block. The study by the Royal Society and its counterpart in the U.S. is another building block. This is a gradual process. Now the Minister is in the driver's seat and he has to deliver. He must remember that his predecessor, in May of last year in this House, made a pretty strong statement promising some programs between Canada and the EPA on toxic chemicals in the Great Lakes.

● (1230)

I will conclude by saying we have moved this motion, and it is the second motion in 1986 on this crucial matter, because we can see that the well being of the economy and the health of Canadians of this and future generations are at stake here. This is a generational issue.

In the eight months since the Minister has been appointed he has not made one statement on his own initiative on this important matter unless prodded by us. Finally, Canadians at large, from Montreal to the west, are very nervous about this issue. I hope in his speech the Minister will reassure us that he understands the importance of being the negotiator for Canada, keeping the ranks together on the Canadian side, rather than giving away a bargaining position, and second, that he understands fully the power and the strength that he can derive from the proper, correct and decent interpretation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978.

**Mr. Gurbin:** Mr. Speaker, I have two short questions which have to do with information. During the Member's comments he was discussing what has happened historically. He left out some of the important factors and accomplishments he was not able to achieve in his time as Minister of the Environment. Most of what he is talking about has to do with information.