

*Oral Questions***ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

ACID RAIN—POLLUTION FROM U.S. SOURCES

Mr. Norman Kelly (Scarborough Centre): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of the Environment. The United States has just approved a bill which will replace oil by coal in 80 power plants throughout the northeastern states.

Since this bill has the potential to increase the acid rain content in parts of southern Ontario and the maritimes by nearly 16 per cent, I ask the minister whether he would inform the House of his reaction to the bill and outline the course of action he might pursue to protect the Canadian environment.

Some hon. Members: Order.

An hon. Member: This question was asked yesterday.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, this is an extremely serious situation and we are very concerned about it. The legislative proposals have not passed through the entire legislative system of the U.S. government. They have, however, passed the Senate, which is one step toward their completion.

We have expressed on many occasions our concern to the U.S. government, on my own part as recently as last Monday when I met with Mr. Costle, the director of the Environmental Protection Agency of the U.S. We are renewing our expressions of concern to the United States. The legislative proposals still have to go through the House of Representatives. I expect that in the process of undertaking that path they will be substantially modified.

● (1440)

But I share the concern expressed by the hon. member. It is an extremely serious situation. We have made our views on this matter clearly known to the Americans on many occasions. We will not in any way diminish our efforts but will, rather, redouble our efforts to ensure that the American Congress, the Administration and the American public are conscious of the very grave dangers which these proposals imply not only for Canada but for the United States as well.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Another admission of ineffectiveness.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

NAVAL DESTROYERS—SECOND PHASE OF UPGRADING PROGRAM

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is undoubtedly aware of the advanced age of our 16 steam destroyers and, therefore, that their equipment is subject to unpredictable breakdowns and failures. Could the minister inform the House whether he is planning to announce the second phase of the upgrading program, Delex?

[*Translation*]

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I am fully aware of the Delex program. The first phase is practically over and I believe we will try, depending on available resources, to launch the second phase as soon as possible. I agree with my colleague opposite that this program is of extreme urgency and we will do our utmost to complete it as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): I was wondering whether the minister would be able to tell us the cost of the second phase of the program, and what action he is taking to have his officials prepare for the day when the Delex program comes to an end in 1990 to replace the destroyers which are now being upgraded?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, everyone knows full well that there is a program to replace the six frigates. As was recently mentioned, there is no undue delay in the implementation of this program. Obviously, as soon as the decision is made to replace these six frigates, we will have to consider the study which will be submitted to us at the end of this month on the possibility of building smaller ships, which incidentally was a suggestion made by the official opposition, and to try and continue upgrading our destroyer fleet.

[*English*]

EQUIPMENT AND MORALE OF CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds-Grenville): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. The minister told the news media that he does not want to talk about a defence white paper because it bores him, and that we should read the speeches of the defence staff to know what is going on.

Considering there has been no defence white paper for ten years and defence costs are about \$5 billion per year, does the minister not think it is time the people of Canada had the right to know the present equipment and morale status of our forces and the exact plans of the government for the future, especially in view of critical statements on these matters made by some of the very same persons on the defence staff he told us to listen to?