

fringe benefits he intends to tax. Is he going to include free parking, based on the rates at the commercial parking lot on the next block, and so on?

**Mr. Bussi eres:** Madam Speaker, it has been some time since I last read the interpretation bulletin for employers, concerning work-related benefits. I promise the Hon. Member and this House that I will review this interpretation bulletin, and I shall then be in a better position to provide further details on this matter to the Hon. Member and other Members of this House.

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[English]

### ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON DRINKING QUALITY OF GREAT LAKES WATER

**Mr. Neil Young (Beaches):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday the Minister visited a number of dump sites on the U.S. side of the Niagara River. Following that visit he said that he was calling for an urgent series of meetings amongst Government at all levels. He also said the reason for these meetings was that:

● (1450)

—only a fraction of the 2,000 potentially harmful substances that have been detected in the Great Lakes basin ecosystem—

—have been identified. Then, in the same breath, the Minister went on to say:

There is no reason to be concerned about the present drinking water quality of water in the Great Lakes.

Can the Minister explain to the House what he means by that kind of a contradictory statement? There is either a problem, or there is not a problem. All the evidence indicates that there is a very serious problem, yet the Minister attempts to brush it aside by making that kind of a statement. It does not make sense, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of the Environment):** Madam Speaker, yes, I will explain the statement. Perhaps the most useful thing I can do is to refer the Hon. Member to a series of articles appearing at the present time in *The Globe and Mail*, which very clearly make exactly the same point.

There is no reason to doubt that the present health standards are being met. What we are finding in the water confirms not only that the water quality well and easily meets the standards established by Health and Welfare and also by the World Health Organization. The problems that we are detecting now, however, give us concern for the longer term development of water quality in the Great Lakes. If the Hon. Member looks carefully at the speech I made last night, and if he looks carefully at the articles which have appeared in *The Globe and Mail*, I think he will find a very clear explanation of the difference between the short-term situation and the long-term challenge it presents.

### Oral Questions

**Mr. Young:** Madam Speaker, I did not read his speech but I certainly read the press release.

#### POLLUTION CAUSED BY UNITED STATES DUMPS

**Mr. Neil Young (Beaches):** Madam Speaker, in the Minister's press release he expresses great concern about the Hyde Park site, the "S" area site, the Love Canal site, and others. The Minister points out that the pollution is certainly stemming from those sources and that the U.S. Government is not taking enough speedy action to clean them up. Will the Minister tell the House whether he has considered taking any legal action against either the U.S. Government or the owners of those dump sites to protect the drinking water supply of some four million Canadians around Lake Ontario?

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of the Environment):** Yes, Madam Speaker, we have considered that course of action. If the Hon. Member would refer to past answers that I have given to the House, he will see that we have explained why we do not believe it is useful for the federal Government to institute legal actions.

We have a variety of means of redress which we exercise with the American authorities. I think it would be unwise for us to abandon, as practically would be the case, our alternative remedies by relying on the court process. If we were to enter legal action it is very possible, indeed probable, that the American administration would say, "Since you entered the legal process we must abide by the results of that process". In fact that process is a very lengthy, time consuming one. While we have supported, in a variety of ways, groups which do intervene in the American legal process, simply in terms of practicality and in maximizing the means by which we have to call upon the American administration for redress it would be unwise for us to restrain ourselves, or restrict ourselves to the legalistic approach.

I think the Hon. Member will find, if he looks at the record, that there has been a long discussion and description of why it is we have taken that approach in terms of the federal Government's involvement in legal action.

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### NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

#### EFFECT ON WESTERN CANADA

**Mr. John Thomson (Calgary South):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Does the Minister appreciate the degree of devastation that has been caused in western Canada by the National Energy Program?

**Hon. Jean Chr etien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, I do not know if that is a very appropriate question. I could go on and explain all the policies, the advantages, and the convenience of every policy.

**Miss MacDonald:** Don't try it.