

Supply

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Am I to understand that the First Secretary was acting on instructions of the Secretary of State for of External Affairs (Mr. Clark)? I am still confused. If in fact the Canadian Embassy in Washington is making calls to a congressman's office on an environmental matter without first having vetted their contact and having been briefed specifically by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard), then I maintain my original premise that the Minister of the Environment is not doing his job. Remember, this is the Minister who came into office five months ago stating that every government initiative and every project and step taken by the Government would first be cleared through the Minister of the Environment. Now we hear the Parliamentary Secretary saying that a call was made to a congressman's office with respect to a waste management Bill, and the Minister of the Environment was not involved in developing a position on that particular issue. If that is so, then who is developing Canadian environmental policy?

Mr. Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, it may well be that this question and answer routine is becoming somewhat reversed in the sense that I think I asked a question of the Hon. Member. I asked a very specific question as to whether or not the Hon. Member and the Party that she represents do not share reservations about the extra territorial nature of Congressman Synar's Bill, which was the only reservation expressed by that Embassy official. By the way, I would think that Embassy officials located in Washington do have a certain responsibility to gather information, so that they can report back to the Ministers here in Canada.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary was here before one o'clock when I made the position of the Liberal Party quite clear.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: I am sure that the Member from Winnipeg is not interested in the fact that 140,000 metric tonnes of toxic waste is imported into Canada every year from the United States. A lot of Canadians are interested in that issue. That is specifically why I raised the position of a Canadian Government which is currently trying to block

a specific piece of legislation in Washington which would put restrictions on the exportation of hazardous waste from the United States. Since Canada currently receives approximately 80 per cent of the hazardous wastes that are exported from the United States, it is my belief that we are rapidly becoming the dumping ground for American waste of a toxic nature and also of a dry nature. We should start putting in place some systems to prevent that. My first line of attack would be to have a bilateral agreement which is at the very least patterned along the lines of the convention that was signed in Switzerland with respect to the international agreement on toxic waste which the United States has not yet signed.

As a second line of attack, there is a Congressman in Washington who is trying to do something in the international arena to prevent American companies from trying to dump their toxic waste on Third World countries and on Canada and the Canadian Embassy and the Canadian Government is preventing that.

My point in Question Period as well as in the continued exploration of this issue is to suggest to the Minister of the Environment and to the Government that at the very least they should be working with Mr. Synar to develop a bilateral approach which will see cradle to grave legislation on both sides of the border so that American companies cannot escape the legal liability, as they are currently able to do, by exporting their waste to Canada, and conversely, so that we Canadians who create toxic waste are ultimately responsible for the disposition of that toxic waste. The only way we will be able to address the horrendous problem of legal and illegal disposition of toxic waste in this country is if we create cradle to grave legislation which puts the onus for the ultimate disposition of the waste on to the shoulders of the company that creates the waste. That is the intention of the Synar Bill. That is why I was somewhat shocked to see the Canadian Embassy in the person of the First Secretary phoning the Congressman's office to express opposition to the Bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate with the Hon. Minister of the Environment.