

asserts Canadian sovereignty in a part of our country under challenge, South Moresby and the Bruce affirm the commitment of this Government, and the commitment also of other Canadians, to preserving our natural heritage.

The same commitment must be made by Canadians to our built heritage, those cultural properties that express our identity as a people and enrich our national life. As the responsible Minister under a 1982 Cabinet decision, I intend to present to my colleagues, in co-operation with all relevant departments, the most far-reaching set of built heritage preservation proposals ever considered by the Government of Canada. Those are but some of my department's and this Government's plans for the environment in the coming months. I am proud of the agenda.

While the past year has largely been devoted to putting that agenda in place, Environment Canada has been active across a broad spectrum. The Department hosted the North American visit of the World Commission on Environment and Development, the so-called Brundtland Commission, headed by the Prime Minister of Norway. We co-sponsored the International World Conservation Strategy Conference. We produced the \$1.5 billion bilateral North American Waterfowl Management Plan. We reached agreement with the United States on the need to reduce toxic chemical loadings in the Niagara River. We are going to work even further to push that program to its logical conclusion so that we will have targets and schedules. We undertook with Ontario a major investigation of contamination in the St. Clair River and reached agreement with Nova Scotia to clean up the worst toxic chemicals disposal sight in eastern Canada, the Sydney Tar Ponds. The Department signed water quality monitoring agreements with Ontario, British Columbia and Newfoundland. We held discussions with the United States, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, on acid rain; and together, in a spirit of neighbourliness, co-operation and international harmony, the president's go-ahead was obtained on work toward a bilateral accord on trans-boundary pollution. There will soon be tough new emission standards for cars and light trucks and new emission standards for heavy duty vehicles. The elimination of lead from gasoline by the end of 1992 will be achieved. My Department published the first ever State of the Environment Report and alerted Canadians to the dangers of misfueling and of tampering with pollution control devices through a massive advertising and public information campaign. Research, information and programs were strengthened concerning weather forecasting, water levels and water quality, wildlife management, environmental contaminants, maintenance of park trails and a host of other activities too numerous to mention in a relatively short speech. The record over the past year, indeed over the past two years, is impressive, Mr. Speaker. What has happened, though, is merely prologue.

Let no one doubt the commitment of this Government to protecting the environment. Here, after all, for the first time in Canadian history is a Government headed by a Prime Minister who has made an environmental issue, acid rain abatement, a

top agenda item in two successive summits and one more to come with the President of the United States. The Prime Minister has pledged to continue this work until acid rain is no longer a bilateral issue by virtue of it being resolved by the two countries.

I began by saying that I would leave the myths and the fantasies to others and deal only with the facts. I am proud, Sir, that the facts speak for themselves.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Speaker, after listening to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan), I would ask, has he reached a point in his role as Minister in this very important portfolio whereby he and his Government have understood the important economic, central and top priority role that his Department has to play in present circumstances? Unfortunately, the Minister spent a lot of time chasing shadows and shadow boxing, accusing the Opposition of all sorts of negative statements which, if they exist, can only be traced to the activities of the Minister or of his Government. For instance, the Minister spent a lot of time on negative forecasts by the Opposition on the future of the Department. I have to remind the Minister that it was his own former Deputy Prime Minister who ordered a report which studied the present and future role of the Department of the Environment. That led to all sorts of speculation until that report was published, and even afterward. It is absurd for the Minister to blame the Opposition for action which was initiated by the former Deputy Prime Minister. These speculations and rumours were fed by the Government until we requested a tabling of the report in mid-June. That report was finally made public in mid-August.

• (1250)

In his speech the Minister elaborated on funds and budgets. He has a selective memory on that. He did not say one word about the actions of his predecessor and the cuts inflicted by her on the Department of the Environment. Those cuts are not fully restored even now.

I hope that once the Minister gets rid of the rhetoric and embellishments of which he is so capable he will come to grips with his important responsibility, to utilize his Department as a major instrument for the economic well-being of Canada in the long term. The Minister has not yet addressed this item. I urge him to address it rather than dealing with inconsequential items here and there. The Minister must come to grips with the major and very important environmental function within the economy of the country. We will be satisfied with his speeches in this House at that time and not before.

Will the Minister indicate something which is very unclear in the Speech from the Throne, namely, when the amendments to the National Parks Act will be tabled? These amendments have been ready since the spring of 1984.

Second, when will the Minister move on gasoline taxation in order to bring about desirable pricing policies whereby unleaded gasoline will cost less than leaded for the benefit of