

Supply

Mr. Keeper: For 16 years.

Mr. Lewis: I appreciate my colleague from the New Democratic Party agreeing with me. I am sure that there are some members of the Liberal Party not here today who would also agree that there have been four and a half years of complete inaction by the former Government.

I admit there are things to do in the transportation of PCBs, and when we have a disaster like the recent spill, we have to examine the matter carefully and make decisions as to how we should proceed in the future. And we are all going to work together on that. I would like to ask the Minister how she accounts for the fact that she and her Department, and this Government, have been able to achieve so much when the Liberals, who were in office for four and a half years, were unable to achieve any of those things.

[Translation]

Mrs. Blais-Grenier: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the Liberals spent all their time arguing with the provinces. They wanted to centralize all responsibilities in Ottawa—and that, of course, flies in the face of Canada's Constitution—whereas we tried to take a different approach by sitting down with the provinces to settle our problems. However, everything cannot be achieved overnight and negotiations do take some time, particularly given the utterly corrupt situation of federal-provincial relations when this Government assumed the leadership of the nation.

The Liberals did not do anything in the environment sector during their last five years at the helm, but now they are telling our Government that all the necessary Acts, provisions and policies were already in place and that we did nothing more than use them. If everything was in place, including the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and the overall policy on the fight against acid rain, then I am wondering why the Liberals failed to act and come up with the kind of legislative provisions that would probably have prevented the Kenora incident!

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to say a few words in this debate. As I listened to the Minister give her answer to that relatively tough question, I thought of Dr. David Suzuki, the great scientist, geneticist and television personality from British Columbia, who gave a speech this weekend which was carried in the newspapers. He really communicates about the modern problems of Canadians. Dr. Suzuki gave us heck, if you like, a slap on the wrist, this weekend when he said that parliamentarians, Hon. Members of the House of Commons, are not really understanding when they deal with modern issues.

Part of this debate deals with a very serious spill about which there are allegations of negligence. We still have not got to the bottom of these allegations. We are dealing with

cut-backs in the Minister's Department and in her whole tenure, whether she is going to survive as environmental Minister. But what do we get in answer to the motion? We get: "Blame it on the Liberals". I do not belong to the Liberal Party and, goodness knows—

Mr. Nunziata: You are welcome to come on over.

Mr. Waddell:—I stood up and criticized the Liberal Party for five years in this House. I just say to my friends across the way and to the Minister that there comes a time when perhaps they should stop blaming everything on the Liberal Party and the previous Liberal Government and start dealing with the current problems of Canada. I think most Canadians would agree with that. I think that if the honeymoon for this Government is not over, it is going to end very rapidly if the Government keeps addressing every question and problem by saying: "Oh well, it was the bad Liberals for the last 16 years".

Last week there was a serious spill of PCBs and no one has been charged, as far as I know. No one has been put in jail. Governments have been slow to react. But this morning, in what was a cowardly and gutless act, the Government used Gestapo-like tactics to take the peace camp away from the Hill. It took some poor young people—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Waddell: My friends are laughing. They think it is very funny that there are young people in jail at this moment—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Some Hon. Members: Sit down!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

Mrs. Mailly: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Gatineau (Mrs. Maily) on a point of order.

Mrs. Maily: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering how the comments of the Hon. Member could be relevant. I thought that we were discussing the environment, but he is talking about a peace camp!

[English]

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the effects—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Do you wish to speak on the point of order?

Mr. Waddell: Yes, I wish to speak on the point of order. I am speaking in this debate about the effects of pollution on the environment of the country. In fact, what I am comparing is what the Government has done with a bunch of kids in the peace camp, who have camped out for two years in winter and summer, and the kind of action it has taken in terms of justice