

*Environmental Affairs*

● (1830)

I suggest that if the Government is as serious as it says it is, here is a good opportunity to take the initiative and provide leadership. It can say we are going to do what Sweden has done and the United States is about to do and ban the use of PCBs. Why wait? All the evidence I have ever seen indicates very clearly that these are not an appropriate chemical to use. There are simply too many hazards associated with them. Doing that would remove the concerns the people of Lone Butte have because this type of highly toxic chemical is being manufactured and produced in their vicinity.

The Parliamentary Secretary seems to have slipped a little bit in his recollection about what has been going on over the last little while, particularly concerning the Niagara River. I want to remind him that last fall the EPA administrator, Mr. Lee Thomas, presented an action plan to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) concerning how the U.S. proposed to deal with the discharge of toxic chemicals into the Niagara River. That action plan was totally unacceptable because it did not envision the actual excavation of the most toxic dumpsites along the river, but merely proposed to somehow contain and extract them over a period of up to 50 years.

At that time the Minister expressed his disappointment with the original plan. I recall him saying it was like holding jello in a sieve, or something of that nature. However, he seems to have changed his tune. Although he continues to favour excavation over extraction, on May 14 he apparently endorsed a revised EPA plan which continues to advocate extraction over excavation for the most deadly of the dumpsites such as Love Canal, Hyde Park, 102nd Street, and the S site. Furthermore, the Minister has not managed to secure any timetable for this plan. Instead, Canadian and American experts will complete by July 1, 1987, a technical documentation of the pollution control measures needed to reduce the direct discharge into the river, including timetables and targets for clean-up.

The best the Minister could offer was a possible 50 per cent reduction of certain chemicals by 1995. That is unacceptable. It is an example of a country caving in to U.S. pressure. It is an example of a Minister of the Environment who simply does not have the courage of his convictions. If what he says is true, it is certainly not being presented in any kind of legislative or funding initiative.

We are very, very concerned about what appears to be going on or not going on. Therefore I want to say a special thank you to my friend from Davenport for enabling us to put on the record of the House of Commons the track record of this Government in dealing with toxic waste. The report card of Environment Canada itself gives the Government of Canada a nice big failure.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the

Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) moved a motion this evening, urging the Government to consider the advisability of protecting the health of Canadians, present and future generations, in three ways. Actually, our Government is in favour of increasing toxicological research on toxic chemicals. The need for intensifying toxicological research and the superior quality of training received by toxicologists in Canada have been recognized for years by the universities, governments and industry. As one of the biggest employers of toxicologists in this country, the Department of National Health and Welfare firmly supports this view, and I think it is encouraging that both the Government and the universities have responded to this need. In fact, over the last ten years, toxicological research and training in Canada has expanded considerably.

Today, we have a number of multidisciplinary research programs in toxicology at several universities and institutes in Canada.

As my hon. friend mentioned earlier, we have the University of Victoria (aquatic toxicology), the Cancer Research Centre of British Columbia (human toxicology), Simon Fraser University (environmental and industrial toxicology), the University of Western Ontario (pharmacology and toxicology), research on asbestos, the University of Montreal (drug and occupational toxicology), Memorial University (environmental toxicology). Three more centres are emerging, and I am referring to the Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan for agricultural toxicology, the Guelph-Toronto Toxicology Centre, again, environmental toxicology, and the Quebec Toxicology Research Centre, for human toxicology.

Most programs in Canadian centres receive federal funds in the form of grants, contributions or service contracts. The Department of National Health and Welfare finances toxicological research under the national program for research and development on health matters. Last year, the Medical Research Council of Canada set aside more than \$150 million for financing this type of research and medical training, especially in medical toxicology.

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada is conducting a program of strategic funding for mesological toxicology. In 1981, the National Research Council set up a new associate committee on toxicology in order to help further development of this discipline in Canada.

Notwithstanding last year's budgetary restrictions, the Department of the Secretary of State, through its Minister and as part of its program for specialisation centres, made a start-up contribution of \$2 million to the Saskatchewan Research Centre.

These details are given to put into perspective the financing problems caused by recent cutbacks. I hope Canadians are now convinced that toxicology is alive and well in Canada and that it is expanding. We realize more should be done, and the Department of National Health and Welfare will be seeking other ways to respond to this need. For instance, it will be