

*Inquiries of the Ministry***POLLUTION****GREAT LAKES—AMOUNT AND NATURE OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO ONTARIO FOR CLEAN-UP**

Mr. Mac T. McCutcheon (Lambton-Kent): May I ask the Minister of the Environment when a decision will be made regarding the amount and nature of federal assistance to the province of Ontario in cleaning up the Great Lakes?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): The amount is being negotiated between the government of Canada and the government of Ontario over the next few weeks.

Mr. McCutcheon: Is the federal government considering the provision of grants or will the assistance extended to the province in connection with this \$300 million project be in the form of loans?

Mr. Davis: The precise nature of this assistance is also under negotiation with the province.

ALLEGED OVERPUBLICIZING OF DANGER—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): I have a related question for the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that many authorities on this subject say that the danger of pollution is being overpublicized, that it is not as severe as was first thought, is there any intention on the part of the government to cut back in connection with projects of this kind? Does the minister support the idea that pollution is not nearly the serious problem it was once thought to be?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): A problem which can be measured in terms of billions of dollars in the opinion of many people who are very competent on the subject impresses me as being a serious one.

Mr. MacInnis: I would then ask the minister why he made the statement that he did not believe what he read about dying lakes and sickening seas, because most of it was poppycock written by novices who were reaching for headlines? That is a direct quotation from a statement by the minister and I should like to have an explanation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Muir: Come on! Wake up!

Mr. Davis: It sounds like an interesting quotation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Davis: I really do not think I am the source, but I will look it up and try to track it down.

Mr. MacInnis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order refers to the ruling you have made in the House on other occasions that ministers are not allowed to ask backbenchers in the opposition for answers to questions they themselves cannot answer.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling still stands even when the hon. member is a frontbencher.

[Mr. Sharp.]

INDIAN AFFAIRS**SUSPECTED POISONING OF FOUR WASWANAPI INDIANS BY MERCURY IN DOMTAR PLANT EFFLUENT**

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Would the hon. gentleman make a brief statement on the reported hospitalization in Montreal of four Waswanipi Indians suffering from suspected mercury poisoning associated with the effluent of a Domtar chlor-alkali plant at Lebel-sur-Quévillon near Matagami in northern Quebec?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am unable to report to the House on that mishap. I will enquire and inform the member as soon as possible.

[English]

Mr. Peters: Could the Minister of the Environment report to the House whether or not this Domtar plant was included in his department's survey of plants using mercury, and whether this plant has made any attempt to meet or has met the standards set by his department?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Domtar's plant was one of those covered by our survey. I believe it has met the standards we have laid down. However, I will check this out.

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YOUTH**OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM—SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT PROTEST CONCERNING GRANT TO NEWSPAPER, "PRAIRIE FIRE"**

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): My question is for the Secretary of State but in his absence perhaps it can be handled by the parliamentary secretary. Has the Department of the Secretary of State received a protest from the government of Saskatchewan about the Opportunities for Youth program providing a \$7,000 grant to the underground newspaper *Prairie Fire* which, according to the premier of Saskatchewan, is operated by a militant minority of socialists, Maoists and left-wingers? If so, does the minister intend to make inquiries and a statement on this matter?

Mr. James Hugh Faulkner (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): I can say we have received a variety of protests. As to the second part of the question, I would like to consult with the Secretary of State with a view to providing an answer later.

Mr. Dinsdale: Can the parliamentary secretary indicate whether the Opportunities for Youth program will provide grants to other newspapers, such as the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, to hire young people?