

Private Members' Business

According to Mr. Goyer, the RMOC has lost ground on the prevention front and a tripartite federal-provincial-municipal program would help slow the deterioration.

My city, Ottawa, for its part must spend \$830 million to rebuild its outdated infrastructure. For lack of federal aid, the city of Ottawa will need 20 to 35 years to rebuild its roads, sidewalks and sewers. It will take 20 years to redo an essential project for separating the storm and sanitary sewers in downtown Ottawa. These costs do not even include normal system maintenance.

• (1910)

In a letter he sent to me on October 25, 1988, then-Mayor Durrell of Ottawa wrote:

The never-ending discussions to find who is responsible, like those to date with the federal government, only make matters worse. The federal government has already helped municipalities, so it knew about the state of urban infrastructure. However, the situation has never been as urgent as it is today.

Mr. Speaker, the municipal infrastructure program is of the utmost importance. If we want to leave a healthy environment for our children and the generations that will come after us, we must act quickly. Canada's highway system, an investment of over \$100 billion, is now threatened by inadequate funding.

In Ontario, 138 of 371 sewage treatment plants do not meet provincial standards. In Newfoundland, more than 48,000 homes do not have adequate water and sewage services and 80 per cent of the population drinks improperly treated water.

In 1986, Canadians spent more than \$80 million for bottled drinking water. It is unbelievable that in Canada, the richest country in drinking water, we spent \$80 million to buy bottled water!

As the Liberal report on Canadian infrastructure indicates, this is hardly a surprise when we know that the residents of many Canadian regions cannot eat fish from the lakes and rivers that supply their drinking water, because that fish poses a threat to their health.

What about the beaches, right here in the capital, which are closed to bathers during the summer because of too much pollution caused by sewage? We can think of Mooney's Bay, Westboro Beach, Constance Bay, Britannia Beach and many others which are completely closed because of water pollution.

In Ottawa, there have been many cases of ground water contamination, not from septic tanks, but from municipal dumps where household and industrial rubbish are buried. During the degradation process of the rubbish, some liquids leak and eventually, through gravity, contaminate ground water. Worse still, in some cases drinking water is contaminated by highly polluting industrial rubbish such as polychlorinated biphenyls, shellac, solvents, as well as heavy metals.

The federal government is certainly aware of the problem since, as I said last week, it contributed to polluting our water by pouring toxic products in it. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, pollution is not only an issue of municipal jurisdiction. It is a national issue and we have to do something about it.

In a report entitled "A Green Plan for a Green Canada", a committee composed of representatives from aboriginal organizations and groups for the protection of the environment wrote: "The federal government has had a great influence on the evolution of Canadian cities. It must continue to play a role and make those cities more pleasant by participating in the solution of problems such as air and water pollution, as well as the elimination of waste. The federal responsibility as regards the protection of Canadians' health is in itself sufficient justification for the government to be a leader and to take energetic action."

The contribution of the federal government in the development of infrastructure is not something new. The main contribution of the federal government in the development of water and water treatment systems was made through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 1961 and ended in 1980 with the program for community equipment such as main sewers, water supply systems, aqueducts, and all those things.