

shocked. It is a little sad to see the kind of spurious raving that emanates from the minds of those opposite these days.

The evidence shows that the permanent on-land impoundment of tailings in perpetuity in the rugged terrain in areas such as Alice Arm cannot be assured at any cost. And the failure to make such an impoundment due to heavy rains or earthquakes could lead to severe environmental consequences. It could destroy the fisheries and the wildlife habitat near the mouth of the Illiance River.

Members from British Columbia know that there is a high potential for mudslides and snowslides in that Province. Many will recall the severe flooding at Terrace, B.C., a few years ago.

Mr. Fulton: The sky is falling.

Mr. Tobin: The damage was estimated at \$20 million. If there was a tailings pond failure at the Kitsault mine, nobody knows what the cost would be in environmental damage, but it would be high.

I would like to turn now to another part of the Amax debate and that is the toxicity of the tailings and the impact that they will have on the waters of Alice Arm. The Hon. Member for Skeena is fond of referring to uranium and radium-226, among other things, in the Kitsault tailings, and to the terrible danger these two, sinister-sounding materials represent. This is a complete distortion, like other distortions that have been thrown into the Amax debate.

Uranium and radium-226 are naturally occurring elements found everywhere in the rocks and soils across Canada. These elements are present right now in the very stones and other materials that were used to construct the Parliament Buildings and this very Chamber I stand in. They are all around us right now.

Mr. Fulton: Why do you not go eat some?

Mr. Tobin: Let me assure the Hon. Member for Skeena that he is in no danger, or at least he is in no more danger than he would be anywhere else. I think the greatest thing he has to fear is not fear itself, but this capacity he has to behave as an unguided missile every time he opens his mouth.

● (1610)

The average uranium concentration of ordinary rock in the crust of the earth is around three or four parts per million. The uranium content of the rock in Amax tailings runs somewhere around two parts per million—less than the average found in the stones used to construct this building, Mr. Speaker. What has the Hon. Member done? He talked about uranium-226. Of course, citizens not aware that this is a common substance found anywhere in this land would react with great fear. It is a very perverted mind which would play on that fear and continue espousing these words in hopes of scoring cheap political points.

An Hon. Member: You are a wimp.

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Mr. Tobin: A wimp? Yes, you are a wimp. I regret to say it. I believe I would much rather be a wimp than be somebody who would deliberately play on the fears of the public, who would deliberately use buzz words and frighten the population in order to score political points.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by making two simple statements. I believe the Hon. Member for Skeena in his heart, if he has one, knows the truth. There was no political interference in the scientific examination of the Amax issue. If he infers that in fact there was, then he calls into question the reputation of the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, and the very fine men who acted on an independent review panel.

Second, there was no favour extended to Amax.

An Hon. Member: You are ignorant of—

Mr. Tobin: No, I am not ignorant. I am just not hallucinating most of my life. The decision to permit underwater disposal at Alice Arm was made on the basis of scientific evidence, and it was a very sound decision. A controversial decision, yes. When we talk about the environment, I hope there is always good cut and thrust in debate. I hope there is always a requirement to ask for a second, third and fourth opinion. That is important, Mr. Speaker. But having asked for those second, third and fourth opinions, and having received them from independent, qualified sources, let us not have an hon. gentleman—and we give him that title—stand in this House and insinuate and smear the reputations of people who cannot come here to defend themselves. Let us not have an hon. gentleman use the immunity of this House to make statements he dare not make outside the confines of this building, Mr. Speaker. That is perhaps the real test of the courage of the Hon. Member opposite.

Mr. Fulton: You say that outside the House with me, little boy!

Mr. Tobin: It is only my maturity, Mr. Speaker, and my wisdom which prevents me from responding to that kind of childlike challenge.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, the Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), I too am perplexed as to why the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) continues to flog this issue. I would like to reiterate the fact that all scientific documents upon which the design to authorize marine tailings deposits in Alice Arm was based have always been freely available. They have been provided to the Hon. Member for Skeena and to other interested groups. All technical reports on monitoring the discharge and other special studies have also been made available to the public.

In addition, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané) has tabled all requested external correspondence on the Amax matter. Only internal memoranda providing advice to the Minister and the Department have not been released, as is the usual practice.