

*Canadian Environmental Protection Act*

The Minister and his Department have made an effort to demonstrate the significance the Government attaches to environmental issues. However, I would like to compare that with what has been the reality in my part of the country as shown by actual performance and activity on environmental crises. Perhaps I am talking about the difference between smiles and rhetoric in the House of Commons and dismal performance on the ground. That is the way I see it at the local level in Essex—Windsor.

The Government made very important commitments in 1985 and 1986 to do something about the so-called St. Clair blob. It committed itself to trying to find its actual source and to deal with what was causing it. There was tremendous publicity at the time. As the publicity disappeared, so, I am afraid, did the commitment to find what was actually causing that tremendously dangerous sediment to form on the bottom of the St. Clair River.

Adjacent to the Dow Chemical Company on the St. Clair River, there are still increasing deposits of dangerous chemicals including Dioxin TCDD2378, a chemical which has a tremendously damaging effect on the human body and has been tied to the emergence of cancer. We have not solved the problem, despite the great amount of publicity at the time.

Just across the river from the City of Windsor, an incinerator is being erected by the City of Detroit. This incinerator does not have the basic safeguards which are required to stop air emissions from polluting not only Detroit but, even worse, polluting Windsor and some of the best farmland in Canada which is in Essex County. The Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan), in a press release last year, said that we would find a solution to this problem. However, the urgency expressed rhetorically has not been shown in practice.

The incinerator project continues to go forward, despite 30,000 signatures from the people of Windsor and Essex County on petitions opposing its establishment without adequate safeguards. The Government is not prepared to take the tough diplomatic action which is necessary. Frankly, I suspect this is because it has been trying to avoid any conflict with the United States that would create more problems for the doomed free trade arrangements.

Beginning this week, I have presented petitions to the House and will present petitions in future weeks to come about the Fermi II nuclear plant in Monroe, Michigan, just 10 miles from the edge of my constituency. This nuclear reactor has experienced a continual series of devastating mishaps, glitches and mistakes which have left the people of my constituency without any confidence in it. Its basic design raises clear concern over danger. In addition, explosive testimony has been given to a House of Representatives subcommittee in the United States demonstrating that the American Nuclear Regulatory Commission was frankly hoodwinked into providing licencing for Fermi II.

Given this hoodwinking and the tremendous danger to our economy, our society and our people, we have asked that our

Government make a commitment to get Canadians and Americans in neutral positions to review Fermi II before it comes into full operation and see to it that it is given a complete and thorough safety check. If it does not meet the full-scale safety review, it should be shut down and shut down for good. Again, however, the Government came through with its eternal no to a basic environmental concern.

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Similarly, we can talk about the municipal sewage problem in the City of Windsor and Sandwich West. This is not just a local problem. It leads to a flow of effluent into the Detroit River, thereby polluting an international body of water. Yet despite the most consistent pressure brought to bear on the Minister of the Environment, he has not been prepared to offer any assistance whatsoever in upgrading the sewage system. The same thing applies to the Turkey Creek situation in Sandwich West which is dangerous to the health of people in that part of my constituency and to the community itself.

This is not something this House has refused to do before. We have provided help for upgrading of such municipal services in the past. It has worked tremendously to generate jobs as well as providing environmental protection. Yet in this great Bill entitled the Environmental Protection Act there is absolutely no commitment of any kind to this type of activity. Another eternal no.

As well, my constituency has asked the Minister and regional environmental officials to provide assistance to environmental groups who are working hard to try to counter these serious problems. We have asked for help for MAD, Maidstone Against Dumping; RADAR, the Rochester Township group; and the Clean Water Alliance of Windsor. In case after case, despite smiles and graciousness here in the House of Commons, we have in the end received a no from the Government.

The same is true with respect to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement which the Government is now renewing. The Government has attempted to portray the renewal process as a great step forward. Yet in practice it has rejected the principle of zero discharge of toxic substances. We think that this is crucial to turning around a disastrous situation in the Great Lakes. We have asked for changes in the agreement and the IJC committees monitoring the agreement. These changes would permit public representatives, not just scientists, to have some role in developing agreements.

I could go on, but I have chosen to illustrate only cases from my constituency which demonstrate this sense of rejection at the ground level of initiatives which could put our environment in better shape. That is why it is impossible to take seriously this legislation which claims to protect the environment. The reality is that nothing serious is being done, and the suspicion has to be that this legislation will work in exactly the same way at the national level. It is clearly weak. It has gaps through