

Oral Questions

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. On October 1, Canada and the United States announced a joint program to practically eliminate all toxic substances in Lake Superior, as they put it. Much of that pollution is caused by the bleach used by the pulp and paper mills.

How will the minister reach this goal, since he refused two weeks ago to regulate toxic substances produced by these plants, except in two cases?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, since then, we have announced regulations for paper manufacturers throughout Canada that will regulate, under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, dioxins and furans. That will help reduce the level of organo-chlorines getting into our waterways from 600,000 tonnes in 1988 to about 400,000 tonnes in 1993. That is a 60 per cent reduction in the level of organo-chlorines getting into our environment, less than 2 kilograms per tonne. Moreover, that initiative will cost the industry approximately \$3 billion, since it will have to modernize to meet the new standards in effect throughout Canada.

[English]

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the same minister. The Attorney General criticizes the environment department for not having specific goals and deadlines to stop pollution of the Great Lakes and for dragging its feet on regulating toxic substances. Since the minister refuses to regulate the entire pulp mill effluent, which he admits is a toxic substance, in its entirety, will he tell Canadians today what targets and deadlines he is prepared to set so we can meet our international obligations to stop poisoning the Great Lakes?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): For the sake of clarity, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member was referring to the Auditor General, not the Attorney General. May I point out that in the Auditor General's report that referred to matters that pertained to government policy before the green plan and that pertained in respect to the Great Lakes, to a report if I

remember correctly that was published in 1988 or 1989, and that has since been corrected in terms of its approach. At least there has been some *améliorations* in the way that we have done things.

We have brought forward regulations for the pulp and paper industry that will reduce substantially the amount of organo-chlorines that go into the environment. In fact, by regulating dioxins and furans to a cost of approximately \$3 billion to the industry, we will create a situation in regard to dioxins and furans that will oblige the industries to produce non-measurable levels of dioxins and furans.

That meets the test of virtual eliminations.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister responsible for small business.

A great many Canadians are concerned about the reports of continuing erosion of Canadian business interests to the United States. If such a trend of erosion does exist and if it is growing among our small business interests, then indeed it is a matter for serious and time for action.

Will the minister tell us if we are losing a significant number of Canadian businesses to the United States and, if so, what are we doing about it?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the whole House will be interested in the answer to that particular question because it is a very important question as we return to our constituencies.

Statistics Canada has just released figures which indicate from October 1989 to September 1991 that 5,000 additional manufacturers have been established in Canada and 30,000 new jobs have resulted.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hockin: Mr. Speaker, I ask myself why this has happened. We know why this has happened.

First of all, we have a \$500,000 capital gains exemption. We have the lowest corporate rate for small business in the OECD. We have lower medical and health care costs, far lower than in the United States, plus we now have a prime rate competitive with the