

of a machine which is a source of wealth for a large segment of the population of Quebec and other parts of the country.

Switzerland has also prohibited use of motor boats on most lakes because they felt that the water of those lakes was worth protecting, and that the worst pollution of lake waters is caused precisely by motor boats.

At the same time, Switzerland does not allow use of calcium or salt to melt snow on highways. They maintain—and rightly so—that calcium or salt tend to pollute rivers.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we are not prepared to take such drastic measures to protect the ecology. However, we in our part of the country, where very large sums have been invested in the building and developing of resort areas, are deeply interested in the development of our pollution control program.

• (2140)

A while ago, we heard hon. members of the opposition insinuate all sorts of things with regard to the so-called failure of the federal government to act and fight against pollution, to implement measures against it. Some of those measures were mentioned, but I would like to add a few. Someone referred to the opportunities for youth projects that were carried out in my riding. Our young people made praise-worthy efforts to enlighten the people, the adults, to impress them with the fact that fighting against pollution is not solely the responsibility of our governments, but that it is also that of the consumer, the people who, if they pay attention, if they can, can protect our streams, rivers, lakes and mountains.

Under the Opportunities for Youth program, Mr. Speaker, we have seen students devote two months during the summer to enlighten the people and attempt to prepare them to assume their responsibilities and make their contribution to the protection of environment.

We have also seen local initiatives programs which specifically undertook to clean our streams and our lake shores to ensure a better and fresher environment for Canadians.

No doubt, Mr. Speaker, pollution is threatening our people and its effects on our country—which nature has richly endowed in terms of splendour, size, great number of streams and lakes—point to the vital importance of that issue.

On the other hand, our resources will be destroyed very soon if people do not watch over them and if we fail to take the appropriate steps as soon as possible.

That is probably why the provincial government wants to generate electric power on James Bay, a priority for Quebec authorities.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity of discussing the effects and costs of producing electricity through nuclear fission, and I am informed that wastes from nuclear reactors will become a most serious problem over the next 25 years because we have grown used to burying them in concrete caissons on the bottom of the ocean. Since the ocean belongs to everybody, this very seriously jeopardizes underwater forms of life. If some day one of

the caissons should explode and should a large portion of the ocean be contaminated, what would happen then?

The solution to the problem lies, I think, in the development of hydroelectric projects through the use of hydroelectric energy, which produces no fall-out whatever nor any waste that could pollute the environment. The resource that are our streams should be developed further in the interest of Canadians before there is thought of selling this electric power to our neighbours. The last years of the 20th century will demonstrate the very great value of electricity, a wealth which our neighbours to the south already envy us, as they have discovered that the salvation of the ecology and the environment in North America lies in the development of hydroelectric power to produce the electricity that is sorely needed.

Those are the few remarks I intended to make during this debate, Mr. Speaker, in order to put across the views of a representative of a part of the province that depends on this integrity of the ecology, the environment, to which we attach a great deal of importance because, as I said at the beginning, the ecology or the environment is our raw material, a raw material which we have in abundance but which could very soon be depleted.

It is of such an importance, Mr. Speaker, that we must encourage the government to look into this problem and to find the proper solutions as rapidly as possible.

[English]

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I want to use the time available to me to deal with three aspects of the resolution that is before us. First, I would like to deal with the need for national standards for pollution control and the constitutional problems associated with this need. Secondly, I would like to suggest some immediate action that the federal government could take in order to diminish pollution and at the same time create a large number of jobs and assist the disadvantaged regions of the country. Thirdly, I would like to take a moment to discuss the necessity for citizen involvement in environmental control.

The need for national standards for pollution control has been argued at length by my colleagues, in this debate and in others. The most compelling argument for a paramount federal role is economic in nature. Because of the disparities in economic terms which exist between the provinces, the failure to provide a paramount federal power is to invite provinces to compete for industrial development on the basis of more relaxed pollution laws. Economically weaker provinces are unlikely to resist the temptation to entice industries to locate within their borders by lower capital costs and operating costs which might well result from less stringent anti-pollution regulations.

One need look no further than at the current reaction of the provincial governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to the terms of the Maritimes claims fund for an illustration of this. Faced with the threat of the withdrawal of development funds by large corporations, the two provinces are raising the roof. Adjustments in the federal law may be necessary, but I ask myself if there would be any meaningful controls at all in those provinces if it were not for the federal presence. I think not, Mr.