

Agency director's appointment was confirmed at the end of February 1985, and since then, as the Hon. Member ought to know, I had an initial meeting with Mr. Lee Thomas of the Agency, the director whose appointment has now been confirmed, on March 18, and with members of his staff.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, it is clear the Minister did not answer the question. In fact she never answers questions. She attacks. She attacks and I do not know why, she is worse than a kid at school.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister. She said: I am going to deal with the problems that concern Canadians.

Well, we have seen \$38 million in budgetary cutbacks. The Toxicology Centre in Guelph has disappeared, the National Research Center . . . The Renewable Resources Research Program has been scrapped, the Wildlife Service—

[English]

The Canadian Wildlife Service has been reduced. The toxic chemicals management program, to which the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) has just referred, has also been cancelled. That program addressed the question of toxic materials in Canadian drinking water, mostly in the Great Lakes area. The Minister did not answer that question. She did not answer it because no one wrote the answer for her. She reads well, but she can hardly answer a question of such importance which is put to her. I want to ask the Minister—

[Translation]

—the following question concerning PCBs or polychlorinated biphenyls. Here is the question. Access to Alberta's storage facilities is now being denied. We have been told that such toxic substances will fall under provincial jurisdiction. The Minister is undoubtedly aware that the residents of Pointe-Claire in Quebec are up in arms at the prospect of storage facilities being located in their area. What does the federal Minister intend to do to co-ordinate a program for the disposal of these extremely toxic products with the provinces so as to give them the leadership she is talking about? Will she at long last show leadership and urge the provinces to discuss the major issue of water and air pollution? I point out to the Minister that it is important. She ought to refrain from making partisan politics as she has been doing for half an hour.

Mrs. Blais-Grenier: Mr. Speaker, I should think that I have no lesson to take from the Opposition on partisan politics, because its performance is indeed far below any level of partisan politics. As to the disposal of PCBs, we will co-operate with the provinces as we have been doing from the beginning instead of berating them as you did during your last five years in office when you could have regulated the transportation of PCBs and set up storage facilities but did not.

[English]

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister a question about the PCB spill in Kenora. In her speech she mentioned that she felt her Department and her role as Minister were auxiliary in this matter and that she was

Supply

satisfied with the performance of the provincial Government. Canadians and the people of Ontario expect leadership from the Government. They do not expect the federal Minister to be auxiliary to the provincial Government, which Government has been ineffective in its actions.

The Minister said that she acted immediately upon the crisis occurring, but in the area of environment protection we need preventive action. We should not have to wait for a crisis for the Government to act. There should be legislation, programs and plans in place to prevent such disasters.

Finally, she said that there was legislation. However, this Government has a very poor record in terms of legislation. It has brought forward very little legislation in the House. There is no excuse for having ineffective legislation to deal with incidents such as the PCB spill in Kenora.

I would like the Minister to tell the House and Canadians why she has not provided adequate leadership with respect to PCBs, why she has not taken preventive action, and why effective legislation is not in place to protect Canadians from PCB spills.

[Translation]

Mrs. Blais-Grenier: When we talk about PCB disposal, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that we have to find solutions concerning disposal sites. The way things stand now, people do not want to hear anything about PCB disposal sites in their neighbourhood. The matter of finding suitable sites must be settled with the provinces, and that is why I have asked that it be considered as urgent in the next few weeks so that we might for once make decisions about the disposal of this dangerous substance. If every province does not want to have anything to do with PCB burial within its territory, we will simply have to find adequate means to take our PCBs far enough for storage. There are two aspects to this question: either each province agrees to acknowledge its responsibility with respect to disposal sites, or we will have to settle the PCB transportation issue which is now raising so many objections.

● (1200)

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in the short time we have been in office we have reached agreement with the provinces for a 50 per cent reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions; we have announced tougher automobile standards; we have provided an assured budget for the science of monitoring; we have created an acid rain control office; we have appointed an acid rain control diplomat; we have given a budget of \$150 million to the smelting industry—which is very important to the Sudbury area—and we have provided a budget of \$70,000 for technology in the use of coal. Yet the former Minister of the Environment and the former Government were unable to do any of those things despite four and a half year in office; they were completely bankrupt. They had no ability to get along with anyone or achieve anything—