

Supply

With regard to commercial houseboat activity on the Okanagan and Shuswap Lakes, and the problems of pollution with gray water and disposal of sewage waste, does he have any specific recommendation that he is going to be bringing forward to this House with regard to commercial activity on inland waters?

With respect to recommendations made to the Government by the National Science Council, is this Minister prepared to carry forward with the recommendations for the development of water research institutes and water research and development programs throughout this country.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I am always surprised to hear all the emotional attacks on what the Opposition calls double-talk of the Government. I know that it is a game in politics to say that, but sometimes in politics we should be allowed to say the truth.

I am very surprised to see that all this supposed strong commitment never compelled the Opposition to raise environmental issues during the electoral campaign.

An Hon. Member: Absolutely wrong.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): We were ready to hear those questions. We were ready to deal with them during the campaign but the Opposition parties decided to wage large scale tactics and war during the campaign period. They tried to convince Canadians that the social programs would be destroyed, that we would become Americans. They forgot that the main concern of Canadians now is the environment. This should have been the main issue of the campaign. We were ready to deal with it but it was impossible because we had to reassure Canadians. We succeeded in the end but we lost precious time. The election campaign would have been an appropriate occasion to deal with those questions.

An Hon. Member: Answer his question.

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): As far as specific questions are concerned, we intend to introduce in this House a Bill on safe drinking water. Water quality is a great issue and a great concern of the Government. We will protect the water everywhere in Canada. I assure the Hon. Member that we will deal with his specific questions. We are waiting for reports on most of them. The Government is committed to the preservation of the park. This will be one of the cornerstones of our policy.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a couple of extremely specific questions. The Minister has talked about the great contribution of his Government. Can he explain why in the course of his Government's mandates since 1984, if you factor in inflation and amounts that had already been budgeted in previous Liberal estimates, why his Government has cut \$491 million from environmental spending? Second, over that period of the time, almost half a billion dollars has been cut. Why is this? The Minister claims that the money is still there for all these environmental projects. I would ask him to show me in the Estimates where the money is for the centre for sustainable development that was announced with such force by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) at the United Nations during the election campaign.

• (1220)

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised to hear the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) always going back to those 1984 Budget cuts. I wonder what the Hon. Member could say if the Government had not taken this wrong decision. We know it was a wrong decision. We know that the Government does not make only right decisions. We must have the frankness to admit that in 1984, a bad decision was taken. However, since then, the Government has done more than any previous Government including Liberal Governments, which did nothing about the environment. I was astonished to see that the former Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, was in Montreal last week with environmentalists speaking about the environment. He was Prime Minister of Canada for many years, but he never did anything about the environment.

The Hon. Member complains that the budget has been cut. In absolute figures, this environment budget is the most considerable budget ever voted by a government. The Hon. member asks specifically where is the money in the Estimates for the funding of the Winnipeg international centre. We all know that the commitment has been made by the Minister for External Relations (Mrs. Landry) that \$5 million from CIDA funding will be used for that. If the Hon. Member does not find funding for all commitments made by the Government in the present Estimates, there will be Supplementary Estimates. There is a reserve and all of our commitments will be funded. I make the commitment that by the end of the year, this Government will have spent much more on environment than any previous Government.