

*S. O. 31***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, there is mounting concern about the Great Lakes ecosystem and the threat pollution poses to public health, yet this government has left vacant since last summer the Canadian chair of the International Joint Commission.

Why is the government taking so long to find a suitable replacement? Canada needs a strong commissioner committed to public health, the rehabilitation of the ecosystem and one who is familiar with pressing and difficult issues.

The Great Lakes pose a significant challenge to the IJC, but they are only part of a mandate that includes bilateral issues from St. John's to Vancouver. The IJC needs a full slate of commissioners to represent Canadian interests.

We urge the government to fill this vacancy quickly with a competent person. The Minister of the Environment must ensure that Canada has the means to live up to its commitments.

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**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River):** Mr. Speaker, people on the prairies are getting sick and tired of the Minister of Communications unilaterally dictating what should happen to the prairie phone systems.

Yesterday, a report was released by Dr. Robert Olley of the University of Saskatchewan who is respected as an expert on telecommunications economics across North America. In it he clearly demonstrates that based on actual 1988 figures local phone rates for rural users would jump 167 per cent and those for urban users 140 per cent under the minister's proposals.

Clearly, what the minister is proposing would cut off rural, isolated and low-income Canadians from basic phone service, their lifeline to the communications system of the future. If the minister realizes this, he should withdraw his proposals immediately. If he does not, the Prime Minister should replace him, and replace him now.

**TRIBUTES—THE RIGHT HON. JOHN N. TURNER**

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I rise with the permission of the House to comment on the decision announced earlier today by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, at some early moment I understand, to leave public life. I want to begin by saying, on behalf of all members of this House and I think all Canadians, that his departure will be deeply regretted by Canadians and he will be genuinely missed across this country.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mulroney:** The Leader of the Opposition has held the highest positions in government, including Minister of Justice, Minister of Finance and Prime Minister. All of these functions, without exception, he exercised with dignity and grace. Clearly, we have not always agreed on every issue—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mulroney:** —but on most of them. There were some modest differences over the years.

I have always been aware of the largeness of view, the innate Canadianism and the genuine love of Canada that marked all of his actions.

Of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition it should be said that when he faced a choice between party advantage or what was good for Canada, he always chose the latter, as, for example, in his undeviating support for the Meech Lake Accord, not an easy choice for anyone. However, as he accurately observed in a very eloquent phrase, I believe, it placed him and his party on the right side of history.

I can now say today what I could not say as freely before. In the House he was tough and unrelenting, and I have all the scars you would ever want to see to prove it.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mulroney:** Apart from that, he was also fair.

John Turner was and is an outstanding parliamentarian with a finely tuned understanding of what this House is all about. His reverence for this Chamber was both evident and impressive. He is a man of strong convictions and courage, a man who soldiered on when the going got tough, a man who smiled in the face of adversity and who