

*Supply*

society will have to come to grips with the fact that so many of our environmental problems are rooted in the lifestyle we have chosen. We have chosen a chemical society, and with it the responsibility to protect our life support system from our dependence on these chemicals. We believe that Canadians are ready to take a major step towards learning to live successfully and respectfully with the chemicals that we are now familiar with. It is a step this Government is committed to take and which we will give very determined leadership.

I thank the Member for the opportunity provided today, by the motion put forward, for myself personally and on behalf of the Minister of the Environment, of putting forward my views and the views of the Minister. Additional material on specifics will be added later on in the debate by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Gurbin).

**Mr. Speaker:** Questions and comments. The Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia).

**Mr. Caccia:** If I may be permitted two brief questions of the Minister. How does he envisage the clean-up to be carried out in the St. Clair River, which is an international water body? Second, since the Minister in his speech did not make any reference to the Guelph Toxicology Centre that was scrapped in November, 1985, by his Government, could he tell the House what his plans are to ensure the Centre be established?

● (1230)

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, regarding the St. Clair River first, as the Hon. Member will appreciate, more specific answers will come from the Minister of the Environment. It is clear for all of us that the co-operation shown by provincial and federal Governments has not only been exemplary but has also brought about confidence that these problems are being taken seriously and things are being cleaned up.

There are provincial guidelines, as the Member knows, respecting the St. Clair River. As the Minister for the Environment has often restated in the House, there was a very quick response time from federal members of the Department of the Environment. In my own Department of Health and Welfare as well officials, specifically of the Health Protection Branch, were in close consultation on the question. If there are any more specific answers needed, I think the Minister of the Environment will reply.

With respect to the toxicology centres, the Guelph Toxicology Centre, the one at Laval University and the one at the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatoon, I am sure that all of us would like to see some advance take place on further toxicology research and facilities to enhance research. We recognize very clearly that the kind of deficits facing Canadians, left by the Government of which the former Minister of the Environment was a part, is proof positive again that it is that kind of financing which puts into jeopardy some of the very good programs society and the Government wants. It is for that reason we are so concerned about getting the economy turned around.

I regard the Hon. Member for Guelph (Mr. Winegard) not only as an excellent Member in the House but an expert on the environment. He is concerned about toxicology at the University of Guelph. Let me say to the Hon. Member for Davenport that the Member from Guelph is working actively on that. I am a great optimist that these questions will be resolved in due time to the satisfaction of us all.

**Mr. McCurdy:** Mr. Speaker, I am always a little mystified by statements such as, the people have chosen a chemical society. It is really absurd. Surely the people choose to use salt, that is a chemical. They choose to use sucrose to put in their coffee, also a chemical. They choose to use a number of things, including that desk over there made of cellulose, a chemical. In none of those instances were serious environmental problems likely to be created. Are these matters to be determined by experts people trust, or by industrialists who begin the syntheses of these products? What about the Governments that have control over them. They provided no context within which people could choose or not choose whether their environment would be loaded with chemicals invented by the hundredfold. Knowledge of the potential risks were far beyond them.

I would point out in that context, as the Minister sits there smiling, that he is apparently no more aware than the general populace of the seriousness of the problem, by virtue of having referred to dioxin and one or two other chemicals when in fact what we are concerned with in Lake St. Clair are 58 chemicals.

We talk about toxicology studies, individual chemicals and about controlling them, from the cradle to the grave. But we have to take note of a number of facts. First, we are not concerned about individual chemicals, no matter how low the concentration. I appreciate, as do other Members on this side, that the increased fastidiousness of scientific detection methods are bound to show the presence, perhaps ultimately, of molecules among the millions. It is true as well that one has to make decisions about what are the risks. How are we to make decisions about those risks when we cannot define the tests of those risks? For example, the test for the risk of a particular chemical is never just whether the chemical is there or what concentrations are present on a particular day, but something more. The question of bio-accumulation is an issue which includes accumulation in our bodies. Even more important, and not addressed, are the effects of combinations of chemicals which in terms of both cumulative and instant effects are totally unknown. It is doubtful whether there is any answer to the question of whether there are acceptable levels of those chemicals individually or in combination, which raises a question pertinent to the Minister's particular area of jurisdiction of health and welfare, that is, what are and what have already been the effects of chemicals in the waters of the Great Lakes and in the drinking waters of the Great Lakes? Various scientists have expressed suspicion about the effects that have already occurred.

Does the Minister have any plans, as a part of the over-all Governments scheme to engage in epidemiological studies which will determine how we have already been affected by