

Adjournment Debate

the dumps and stop the polluters in their tracks, it is high time to implement those plans.

In conclusion, I implore the Minister to take appropriate steps to wipe out pollution where he has jurisdiction, that is on Canadian soil, and to immediately enter into serious negotiations to reach a bilateral accord with the United States on similar controls in that nation. To many people's health and well-being depend on such action. Rhetoric is not enough.

Mr. Henri Tousignant (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Member for Erie (Mr. Fretz) for whom I have great respect. I have so much respect for him that sometimes I think he is a Liberal.

Mr. Fretz: Never, Mr. Speaker, never.

Mr. Tousignant: I would like to thank him for the effort he brings to the solution of this very serious situation. I will reply on behalf of the Minister in French, as it is easier for me.

[Translation]

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Roberts) has informed the House that the Federal Government is bringing pressure to bear upon the United States to clean up the Niagara River. This is being done at the diplomatic, administrative and technical levels. At the administrative level, the advisory committee responsible for the Niagara River which is made up of high officials has met officially six times since last year to urge that action be taken to deal with problems such as that of the S-Area dump. Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States chair jointly this committee which also includes representatives from the Ontario Department of the Environment and the Department of Environmental Conservation of New York State. Through this committee, data and technical advice exchanges have greatly increased between the two countries. However, in the case of the S-Area dump, the publication of information is restricted by a confidentiality agreement between the parties involved in the case now before the court of the New York district, namely the American organizations and Occidental Chemical Corporation. Under this agreement, the EPA cannot discuss with us the details of its negotiations with the company which might lead to a future settlement. Still, the confidentiality agreement does not in any way prevent us from holding discussions with the American Government, and we will continue to make representations to them regarding our concerns and our interest in a settlement. Senior officials of the Department of External Affairs and their counterparts in the American State Department are actively seeking under the terms of the agreement a mutually acceptable solution to obtain information which has been unavailable so far.

On the technical level, the provincial and American organizations have decided to co-ordinate and intensify their monitoring activities under the supervision of the Niagara River Toxic Products Committee. It is necessary to collect and analyze the scientific data to pinpoint the exact sources of the

many chemical products involved, as well as to find effective remedial measures and to set priorities. The Niagara River Toxic Products Committee will publish its final report sometime in December 1983.

Some action has been taken in the case of the Niagara River. In our consultations with the United States, we are trying to find effective ways to solve the problems, and we are using every available diplomatic, administrative and technical mechanism to convince the Americans that it has become very urgent to do something to solve the Niagara River pollution problems.

● (1820)

[English]

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS—POSSIBLE EFFECT OF GULF OIL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN YUKON

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question tonight concerns the possible effect of Gulf Oil development in the northern Yukon. I hope the Parliamentary Secretary is prepared to respond to some of the points that I will put on the record.

The first question concerns aboriginal rights in the northern part of the Yukon and the second concerns the impact of the intrusion of Gulf at Stokes Point or other sites on the north slope that might make a national park a nonviable option.

This is a peculiar situation, Mr. Speaker. As a result of the Berger Inquiry, the National Energy Board, many national environmental groups and native groups requested and received the endorsement of the Government of Canada for certain lands to be withdrawn. On July 6, 1978 Order in Council No. 78568 was Gazetted. This withdrew certain lands from disposition, and included such things as disallowing the location of any claims, any gold, precious metal or mineral prospecting. Clause (b) of the Order in Council stipulates as follows:

—that the lands described in the schedule are required for a national park and other conservation purposes to order the withdrawal of the said lands, including all mines and minerals, whether solid, liquid or gaseous, easements—

It is very clear that what is being pursued by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) is quite improper and is not supported by his colleague, the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts).

On February 25, 1983, an article appeared in the White Horse *Star* under the heading "Environment boycotting Stokes Pt. meeting" and it states as follows:

Environment Canada is not participating in the study of potential port sites on the Arctic coast because it doesn't want to help make a decision to build a harbour it doesn't support.

Environment Minister John Roberts has publicly stated his opposition to any decision that would allow development along the north shore, especially on the Yukon's north slope.

Gulf Canada applied last summer for Northern Development Department permission to build a deep-water wintering harbor at Stokes Point. The company wants that site because it says it can accommodate its huge Conical Drilling Units.