

*Oral Questions***ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS****NIAGARA RIVER POLLUTION—AMERICAN CHEMICAL WASTE DUMPS**

**Mr. Alan Redway (York East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment and it concerns his meeting this morning with the administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and their discussions relating to the chemical waste dumps along the American side of the Niagara River. Would the Minister advise the House if the proposals put to him today included a provision for the actual removal and destruction of the toxic wastes in those dumps, or whether it included just retaining the toxic wastes in their present location?

**Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is correct. I met this morning with the head of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Mr. Lee Thomas, whom I am happy to welcome to the House this afternoon.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Order.

**Mr. McMillan:** He tabled for the Department of the Environment and for myself, in particular, the most extensive proposed action plan from the U.S. Government to the Canadian Government on any specific environmental issue in the recollection of any of my officials. The plan, which I have only now received and have yet to have a chance to read in detail, covers every facet of the clean-up of the pollutants to which the Hon. Member referred—

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Order.

**Mr. McMillan:**—including the possibility of extraction and elimination.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

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**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS****TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO PROVINCES**

**Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Next week during National Universities Week across this country, instead of celebrating, professors and students will be racked with uncertainty. At the recent meeting of federal and provincial Ministers of Finance, this Government announced that not only will it stand by its unilateral budget decision to reduce \$2 billion from expected federal transfer payments to the provinces, but that these cuts to the transfer payments will begin next year instead of in 1990.

Does this not mean that this Government, instead of taking away \$2 billion from the provinces by 1990, is really taking away up to \$6 billion by starting right away in 1986?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear to the Hon. Member that these are not cuts. They are reductions in the growth rate.

**Ms. Jewett:** Oh, what a euphemism.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** The growth rate will still be substantial. There will still be billions of dollars which will be transferred to the provinces for the very worth-while programs in health and post-secondary education.

**Ms. Jewett:** You are just muddying the waters.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** As I indicated in response to a previous question, the per cent of federal Government spending which is transferred to the provinces will not be changed. It will stay at the current level throughout this whole period. So I caution the Hon. Member not to misinterpret this matter and cast doubts in the minds of the people who are interested in these programs.

**Mr. de Corneille:** Mr. Speaker, obviously the \$6 billion figure has not been denied.

**SIZE OF PAYMENTS—EFFECT ON PROGRAMS**

**Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence):** If the Minister is not going to confirm what the provincial Ministers of Finance heard, and what his own Department said, perhaps he can at least tell us whether the provincial losses of \$6 billion caused by the Government will be spread across the whole system, across the board, or will there be targets of either medicare, post-secondary education or welfare? Which one is going to get the axe?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, there will be no program which will get the axe. That is the point I am making. The amounts which will be transferred by the federal Government to all of these programs will be increasing year after year in accordance with the directions which I set out in the Budget. The growth rate will fall but there will still be substantial amounts of money. No decisions have been taken as to what programs would be affected. That will be the subject of further discussions between the federal and provincial Ministers of Finance.

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● (1450)

**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS****AMERICAN CHEMICAL DUMPS**

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment and concerns whether or not a clean-up of the four worst dumps is involved in the action plan presented by Mr. Thomas to the Minister today.