

*Supply*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Debate, the Hon. Member for Lotbinière.

**Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on the motion introduced by the Hon. Member of the New Democratic Party, particularly on the provision urging the federal Government to table, within five days of the resumption of the parliamentary session, a plan for the safe disposal of toxic wastes in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the handling of hazardous and toxic wastes creates problems with which industrialized nations, including Canada, are anxious to come to grips. We all know it is imperative to set up an effective waste management system, but we must first appreciate the extent of the problem before moving trite and overly simplistic motions such as coming up with a controlled disposal plan within the next three months.

Depending on where it comes from, Mr. Speaker, hazardous waste falls into four categories: (1) by-products of manufacturing processes; (2) consumer products which have become useless or contaminated; (3) residues of dangerous substances accidentally spilled in the environment in the course of transport or storage operations; (4) waste chemicals from laboratories and other specialized institutions.

• (1640)

Among the most common dangerous waste products we include acids generated by metallurgic processes, caustic soda from pulp and paper mills, and oil refining residues. These waste products contain oils, phenol, arsenic, mercury, lead and a number of other chemicals.

There are also such dangerous products as PCBs and pesticides which, owing to their toxicity and lasting presence in the environment, must be subjected to special neutralization or disposal processes.

A simplistic motion does not give us a clue as to how we can achieve the controlled disposal of toxic waste. What we need are sound and logical solutions which will not pollute our atmosphere, our water, and our soil. We must not act with undue haste lest we harm the environment and imperil human, plant and animal life.

What are the environmental and health considerations? Unless they are confined in a space especially

designed for that purpose, waste products dumped in landfill sites may contaminate both ground and surface water. We now know that certain chemical substances contained in these products may enter the food chain as a result of being absorbed by plants, which are then eaten by animals and fish. These substances, Mr. Speaker, become increasingly concentrated as they progress up the food chain. This increased concentration in turn increases the risk of biological, physical and physiological changes that may lead to serious problems such as mutations, cancer and sterility, not only in animals but also in man who, as we know, is at the top of the food pyramid.

The answer, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, is not simple. We must see to it that hazardous waste products that cannot be treated or disposed of locally are monitored from their initial appearance as a result of industrial processing until they are treated or disposed of in licensed facilities.

Mr. Speaker, our objective is to switch from the common practice of crisis management to planned management. Canadians must realize that facilities for the treatment and disposal of waste products provide a practical solution. These facilities should not be perceived negatively, especially since current technology provides for efficient and safe operation of well-designed treatment systems equipped with the best possible anti-pollution devices.

So we have the technology for waste treatment and the destruction of waste products by incineration, but the problem is choosing the location of facilities and plants that will receive the end products of the treatment process.

Aware of the reservations of Canadians with respect to this technology, the Department of the Environment, with the participation of the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers, has set up a municipal incinerator testing and evaluation program. Canadian communities have started to consider incinerators with energy-from-waste facilities as a major component of a comprehensive waste management plan. About 16 million tonnes of solid waste is produced in our urban communities every year. Every tonne of garbage, when burnt, produces a little more energy than a barrel of crude oil. At today's prices, Mr. Speaker, this adds up to \$350 million annually.