

*Routine Proceedings*

co-operation is certainly needed in areas from capacity building to technology transfer, to the use of alternative substances.

The Government of Canada is announcing this policy for Canadians because it is the right thing to do. In doing so I know we are following a course directly contrary to the course currently being advocated by members of the Congress of the United States. Certain American Congress people are calling for fewer controls over toxic substances. They want to release more toxins into the St. Lawrence, into the Great Lakes, into our oceans and other bodies of water and air we share. With the greatest respect, that downgrading attitude by some members of the United States Congress is dead wrong.

By this policy today Canada is sending a message to the world and in particular to our American partners that we will do our part to deal with toxic substances and we expect them to do theirs.

[Translation]

When you look at the people living along Lake Champlain, who are currently facing an ecological disaster partly because of construction operations by the Americans, it is obvious that the environment knows no boundaries.

By moving Canada to the forefront in managing toxics, we can move Canada to the forefront of new businesses, new green technologies and new green jobs. I am confident that the new policy will serve the long term health of our economy and I know that it will serve the health of our environment and the health of Canadians.

[English]

On Monday I will be in Montreal opening the Biosphere which is another tribute to the possibility for Canada to begin to return to a country where environmental technology is not imported but exported.

[Translation]

At the Biosphere, on Monday, you will see that with the Biodome, the Biosphere, the environmental centre—the public really supports this endeavour—and modern technology, Canadian technology, we are indeed able to go ahead and eliminate these toxic substance. But to succeed, policy and legislation are required to speed up the process of protecting the environment.

● (1220)

[English]

We do not want to go down the road of the Americans who are now saying this to 50 million people who drank water from the Great Lakes. This summer we are getting into a period of

potential smog. I am sorry to say that in the United States the current acceptable levels of smog are about 40 per cent higher than in Canada. Who breathes that?

The Detroit–Windsor corridor sends all the stuff over to the Canadian side and we end up losing work days because of pollution problems caused by persistent toxins that come over from the United States.

We want to make sure with this policy that we have our own house in order to ensure that when we go to Vancouver next week and when we go to the international community and in particular when we go to our American neighbour, we will not allow the U.S. Congress to lose the gains we have made. The action we are taking today is a further commitment to the strategy of pollution prevention which says we should not only focus on cleaning up messes but make sure the messes do not occur in the first place.

This policy does not offer overnight miracles but it does provide a solid foundation for dealing with toxic substances and getting those persistent bioaccumulative toxins out of the environment permanently. The need to take action is easy to understand which is why we are moving today on a policy I think will put us at the forefront of dealing with toxins into the 21st century.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, every year more than 228,000 tons of pollutants of all sorts are dumped into Canada's waters, atmosphere, soil and sub-soil. The cause of all this alarming dumping is simple: it is negligence, whether on the part of careless individuals, unscrupulous manufacturers or governments unable to halt the flow.

I am pleased to rise and speak about the new toxic substance management policy the Minister of the Environment is proposing, which, I hope, will prove to be a practical response to the problems of prolonged toxic dumping that may lead to bioaccumulation. As I have not read the documents tabled today, I am not in a position to express an opinion on the value of the policy. I will therefore simply make four general comments expressing the concerns and worries I have about the minister's speech.

First, I would like to point out that I find it rather surprising the minister is tabling her new policy even before the standing committee of this House has issued its report, due in a few days, on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The minister would definitely have benefited from the committee's work, which took a year's time and which enabled many witnesses to express their concerns and suggest solutions with regard to the problem of managing toxic substances.