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research centre which will deliver the kind of information that this country needs. It will be oriented more towards private enterprise than it would have been before this Government said, "Take it back, do something with it".

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I please ask the Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor (Mr. Langdon) for a short answer or a short comment?

Mr. Langdon: A short answer from me is almost impossible. I will say two things; first, I disagree with the Hon. Member, despite his compliments, that the way to progress is to cut back some of our research centres. I would simply make the point that one of the crucial resources which we have had in the Windsor area in attempting to understand this whole problem and to get action on it has been the Great Lakes Research Institute with its excellent record of detailed research throughout the St. Clair River Basin itself. I hope that we in Windsor will not have to face the way of improving our Great Lakes Research Institute which the Member has suggested for Guelph.

I would like to finish with just one strong plea, and that is, that we keep in mind the urgency of this issue in the sense of not letting it become a choice between economics and environmental protection, but instead that we make it quite clear that our commitment—and I say this as an economist—can be to economic growth that is environmentally sound and environmentally committed to the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, there is no more time.

Ms. Sheila Capps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) for introducing into the public forum an issue which is obviously of concern to every Canadian. That issue is specifically not only the particular problems which have been identified and are being examined in the St. Clair River, but also the general question of water quality and the concerns surrounding the level of toxic chemicals which are being found not only in the St. Clair River but also in other major bodies of water. As a Member of Parliament for Hamilton East I have in my riding an area known as the Windermere basin, which has been identified by the International Joint Commission as one of the most polluted bodies of water in North America. Naturally when we read daily accounts in the media about the difficulty facing the people in the St. Clair River area and those people who are concerned about their drinking water, we too, in the frontier of Lake Ontario have to be concerned in the same way because I think that there is a general feeling among the public that the whole story has yet to be revealed.

In fact, there are a lot of questions, and I have constituents who call my office and say, "Is the water safe to drink? We have seen in the City of Toronto on a number of occasions the beaches being closed and, in fact, even the water itself being examined for levels of toxicity which are absolutely unacceptable. I am sorry to say that even in my own community there is not a regular, systematic review done to measure the level of

dioxin toxicity in the drinking water. It happens to be a piecemeal operation which does not address the very serious concerns which have forced many constituents into the private market to buy their water.

I would respectfully differ with the position of the Hon. Member for Guelph (Mr. Winegard) who has suggested that somehow we will solve this problem by turning over our research capacity to the private sector. It is pretty clear that the private sector will have to concern itself first and foremost with the bottom line and with more immediate results. One of the benefits which had been derived from programs like the herring-gull program, which was snuffed out by this Government, and snuffed out not only by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) but aided and abetted by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret), and the slasher himself, the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Nielsen).

This particular program was prepared to take a long-term look and to develop the kind of data base necessary to attack the problem in Lake Ontario which services the drinking water of more than three million people in its direct vicinity. Instead, in a penny ante approach to long-term environmental solutions, the Minister decided to cut off that program and to say that even though we were seeing deformities being identified in herring gull eggs we were not prepared to carry on with this program because it did not meet the Deputy Prime Minister's bottom line, even though at the time that same Conservative Government promised that the environmental project and the research would not be cut.

● (1800)

We know, Mr. Speaker, that that is simply not the case. We also know, with the cut-backs and the decision by the Government of Canada not to fund to Guelph Toxicology Centre, that the Government is abdicating its responsibility to the private sector suggesting that the private sector will be there to pick up the pieces. The private sector has some immediate short-term concerns relating to productivity and the bottom line. The private sector is not prepared to look at an over-all question of water quality, for example, in the area of the Great Lakes.

Let us take a look at the question of food production and how toxic chemicals impinge upon the food production on a daily basis. We have seen more and more reports about irradiation and what is being allowed to be done to preserve the shelf life of our food in a way that could be extremely detrimental to the health of every Canadian.

I would suggest that private companies in the business of food production will not hold back on irradiation because the long term effects of that process may not be known for many years. We have a responsibility in government to provide leadership in these most difficult areas. I say they are difficult because they involve co-operation at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.

I heard Members on the government side of the House citing, chapter and verse, the shortcomings of the previous Liberal Government with respect to its environmental policy. I