

*Environmental Affairs*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary.

**Mr. Gurbin:** Mr. Speaker, I sat and listened to the Hon. Member, which I often have to do. I would appreciate the same respect from him as I give him. He may not like what I am saying because it is the truth.

**Mr. Caccia:** You're on thin ice again.

**Mr. Gurbin:** I have not enjoyed many of his comments.

This gets to the nub of things. I would be interested to see the Hon. Member for Davenport put his credibility on the line by telling us how much toxin there is in the Niagara River. Nobody knows. The beloved Niagara River Toxic Committee Report, an excellent report does not indicate that. The estimates range between one million and nine million tonnes. This Member would have us as a Government commit ourselves to reducing one-half of one million tonnes a year loading, which is roughly what the report said, when there is probably more like nine million tonnes a year. It makes no sense to try to go forward on the basis of what has been suggested without knowing from where we start and what needs to be accomplished.

**Mr. Caccia:** Studies.

**Mr. Gurbin:** We need no more studies, Mr. Speaker. What we need to establish with credibility is the exact loadings in the river so we can determine what has to be done and specifically where the responsibilities are.

**Mr. Riis:** That is a study.

**Mr. Gurbin:** There are many examples. I am running out of time because of the interruptions, Mr. Speaker. I regret that because there are many other specifics.

Just let me finish off on the subject of the Niagara River. What has eluded Governments before and will continue to elude anyone who came at it from the point of view that we can sit here, dictate and try to fabricate some grand plan or scheme ourselves and not enter into constructive agreements necessary to do something—

**Mr. Caccia:** Why don't you come up with a proposal?

**Mr. Gurbin:** We have a proposal and an objective on which we have been able to reach agreement with the Americans. Within one year from today we will know how much toxic material is going into the Niagara River and how much is coming out. We can subtract and find out then—

**Mr. Caccia:** You have plenty of studies telling you that already.

**Mr. Gurbin:**—what needs to be done, in what specific areas and where the responsibilities lie. We can then set specific targets and goals for the individual components of the problem. We have established clearly that with the United

States we will be able to achieve the real reductions which we need. We think that 50 per cent by 1995 is a reasonable objective. Quite likely we will be able to achieve even better. If the Hon. Member wants to get into a discussion with his friends in Ontario, he will have to do that with them. That is not our purpose here. We are here to co-operate with all governments and to try to get something done.

● (1820)

**Mr. Caccia:** Exactly.

**Mr. Gurbin:** We won't do that by putting headlines in the press. That is not the way to get the job done.

**Mr. Caccia:** You are putting the headlines in. Your Minister put the headlines in.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Order.

**Mr. Gurbin:** The Hon. Member's final point was about waste water treatment and he raised the profile of toxic chemicals. I would like to put something on the record other than the rhetoric which preceded my comments. We have issued a State of the Environment report. It is as full an explanation and documentation of specific information as has ever been made available to Canadians at any time in history. This is the first time this has been accomplished. There is no restriction on any of the information available.

That is an example of our efforts to ensure that we put out accurate information to which people can refer with confidence because it is accurate and has scientific credibility. We have made available to the public all information available to us which we have confidence in. We are committed to doing that and we will continue to do that. We will not editorialize without confidence in the facts and figures. Whenever there is scientifically credible information available, it will be forthcoming.

The Member talked about separation of sewers, which is a long-term problem. For the first time leadership is being shown at the federal level in dealing with the whole range of water problems in Canada.

**Mr. Caccia:** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Gurbin:** This was never done before and it is high time it was done.

**Mr. Caccia:** It has been done for decades.

**Mr. Gurbin:** The Cabinet of Canada has given the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) responsibility for all matters dealing with water. We are in the process of developing a national water policy which has eluded former Governments. This has clearly placed the responsibility for looking after all matters related to water including purity, quality and a number of other issues. This is the first time this has been done and it is high time. It shows leadership—