

ent, and one which is not working successfully in many parts of the country. I have no doubt the system works adequately in the United States where the evaporation rate reaches 140 inches a year and rainfall amounts to 40 inches or so. Obviously, we are kidding ourselves if the federal government is advancing money to build additional lagoons in northern Ontario where they are frozen half the year and where evaporation amounts to less than the rainfall, particularly when we say we are trying to clean up local rivers as part of a total clean-up of the Ottawa River.

Mr. Chairman, the minister may wish to reply after lunch, so I will call it one o'clock.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The committee resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, before lunch I was talking about the effect of pollution in various areas and the methods used to fight it. I had said that in many parts of the mid-Canada corridor the weather conditions and rainfall are such that the outdoor lagoons used by some small communities are not effective for meeting the standards for which the minister is hoping. I suggested that a number of communities in northern Ontario were of absolute necessity dumping sewage into these lagoons, but the amount of rainfall and lack of evaporation meant that in the spring much of the effluent in the lagoons ran in an untreated condition into watercourses. The question I was asking was whether this matter had been considered by the minister's department and any recommendations had been made. The situation is similar to that in the United States, particularly in the southern states, where conditions are considerably different from those in our area.

Last week I was in Timmins where they have installed a new lagoon close to a housing development. Although these lagoons are not supposed to smell, the stench of this lagoon was so bad that some people in the housing development were considering moving. Obviously, that particular lagoon is not functioning in the way expected, and I suspect that the discharge from that lagoon is not such that should be dumped into watercourses. I should like to ask the minister whether he has considered the matter, whether studies are being carried out on the question, and what recommendations he is making to the provinces with regard to developing as an alternative low-cost treatment plants for small communities in areas where lagoons are not functioning well.

Mr. Davis: As the hon. member says, there is a problem about treatment of lagoons in northern communities. The department is looking into this. I do not have the details on hand, but I will make sure that they are made available to the hon. member.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Does that complete consideration of the items under the Department of the Environment?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Supply

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The committee will now consider item 5a of the Department of External Affairs.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, when the estimates were before the miscellaneous estimates committee no indication was given of the purpose of this item. One or two paragraphs appeared in the proceedings of the committee just to show that the item had carried, without anybody knowing what the amount of \$490,500 was for. I wonder whether we could now discover that.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Chairman, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs—absent perhaps partly because it was the view that there would be no discussion of this item—I shall ask that a detailed explanation be given to the hon. member and to other interested hon. members by the parliamentary secretary.

• (1410)

Mr. Howard: I could obtain that information by phoning somebody. I suppose I could obtain it more quickly in that way which might satisfy me.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is the hon. member rising for the purpose of answering a question.

Mr. De Bané: Yes, Mr. Chairman. First I wish to apologize for being late. The expenditure of \$490,500 is for the purpose of opening offices in Atlanta, Budapest and Lusaka which is in Zambia. In the case of Atlanta, the amount is to be \$115,000. In the case of Budapest, the figure is \$60,500 and in the case of Lusaka \$315,000, for a total of \$490,500. Those are capital expenditures and are not in respect of operations or other matters.

Mr. Howard: Fine. Presumably we are building something. From what I can gather from the estimates some of this expenditure would be for the construction and acquisition of land, buildings and equipment. Some of it would be for the acquisition of major equipment.

If I have the correct figure here, it would seem that out of the total of \$490,500 an amount of \$300,000 would be for the construction and acquisition of machinery and equipment. I can understand that we would be constructing buildings and this sort of thing, but I wonder what we are doing in respect of machinery and equipment.

Mr. De Bané: I hope to be able to have the precise information for the hon. member in a very short time in respect of that question.

Mr. Howard: Probably by not paying as much attention to the Department of External Affairs as we should, unfortunately we seem to have a tendency, as was evident in the committee and elsewhere, to think that the Department of External Affairs is a structure which should not be subjected to any questions about what it does. It operates at a level which is presumed to be helpful and beneficial. I think that, as a result, very little attention is being paid to what the Department of External Affairs does, on what it spends its money and the like.

There would seem to be a fantastic amount of waste involved in the Department of External Affairs—probably