

As far as the Government cut-backs are concerned, let me read what Tony Keith, a biologist in the Canadian Wildlife Service, said about that. Incidentally, I have received letters from scientists all over the world who have worked in our Canadian Wildlife Service. They were describing its good work.

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Gatineau (Mrs. Mailly) rises on a point of order.

Mrs. Mailly: That is not the question which I directed to the hon. member. I did not inquire about the reduction in spending. I only asked him whether he remembered when we started to deal with—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please! That is a debatable question.

[English]

It is up to the Member to answer the way he wishes.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I will read this and respond to the last part of her question. The article states:

What Keith is saying is that sooner or later, some prairie slough will fill with the floating carcasses of ducks, killed by untested chemicals from a cropduster that accidentally overflowed a field. Anthrax and brucellosis will cause bison to totter and fall to the muskegs of northern Alberta, and there will be no wildlife veterinarian to treat them. National park wardens may even come across the bloodied body of a camper, the victim of a grizzly attack that might have been prevented with another season's research into bears' feeding habits. And the public outcry may then be so loud that the politicians who are today making the cuts will be forced to rehire the very biological expertise they now dismiss as surplus to departmental requirements. Canadians will have learned the hard way about the true costs of casting out decades of accumulated ecological knowledge for the sake of quick-fix adjustments to one year's federal budget.

The Hon. Member asks me if I am aware of the laws. Is the Government telling us that the federal Government does not have any laws in the Criminal Code or under environmental protection to prosecute those people who are responsible for this PCB disaster, but it has laws to put a few kids from the Peace Camp into jail? If she is saying that, I don't believe her.

Mr. Brisco: Mr. Speaker, first let me respond to the comment about the grizzly attack. Whoever wrote that cannot call himself a biologist or an authority. He is out to lunch. I would invite the Hon. Member to join me on a hunt at any time to find out what it is really like.

I do not wish to denigrate the importance of the PCB problem because it is clearly a very serious one. However, I would like to put it into perspective, if I may, by asking the Hon. Member if he could advise the House how many deaths have occurred as a result of exposure to the PCBs and how many cases of cancer have been identified as a result of exposure to PCBs?

Before the Hon. Member launches into a strident response, let me repeat that I am not in any sense of the word downplaying the seriousness of the problem. I would like the Hon. Member to respond to that particular element.

Supply

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Hon. Member talk to the Departments of Health in the provinces.

Mr. Brisco: Do you know the answer?

Mr. Waddell: Perhaps the Hon. Member will listen. I treat his question seriously, in the manner he intended. I am told that PCBs are carcinogenic, very serious and so on. If he wishes me to acknowledge that we do not know enough about what PCBs do, I will acknowledge that. I believe our society still has a lot to learn about these chemicals and I agree that we should not panic.

However, that does not excuse us from not taking any action at all. My colleague, the Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton), put a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) in the House the other day asking about a follow-up investigation and having some doctors study this couple who have been affected. I have yet to hear an answer about that from the Government. It could at least make one announcement about something substantial that it has done, whether to study the problem through doctors, as I believe the Member would support, or to prosecute or even have a joint federal-provincial investigation.

Again, I point out that when there is a major environmental problem the federal Government washes its hands of it and indicates it's a provincial responsibility. I suggest that the Province of Ontario has been negligent in its handling of this problem. However, the federal Government sure is quick to put a few kids who support peace into jail. The Government can find the laws and the spirit to put them into jail but when it comes to the environment it does nothing. I do not want to downplay it, as the Member suggests, but the fact is that the Government is prepared to act quickly to put kids in jail and it is prepared to drag its feet and be just as negligent as the Ontario Government in taking action on this PCB spill.

Mr. Keeper: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When the Liberal Member spoke earlier, Liberal Members were able to ask questions and make comments. When the Conservative Member spoke, Conservative Members were able to ask questions and make comments. When the NDP representative spoke there was no provision for NDP Members to rise in the House to ask questions or make comments. Since it was a person from our Party who spoke, Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the rule is that we have a right to have a Member stand up, to ask questions and make statements even when someone from our Party is the main speaker. I would like your guidance on that.

● (1240)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The priority is given to Members from the opposing Parties in the question and comment period. After I have gone through the opposing Parties, then I generally choose someone from the Party of the main speaker.

We shall now resume debate.

Mr. George Baker (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few words to the debate. It was very