

*Adjournment Debate*

It would be a very significant accomplishment for the Government, hopefully in its first term of office, to be able to support and put through such an important constitutional change, such as one that in opposition we put forward in 1983, so all Canadians could be secure and know their right to property was entrenched in the Constitution.

**Mr. Chris Speyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the Hon. Member's speech. I can tell her that nothing she has said does the Government disagree with. This Party remains committed to the notion of entrenchment into the Constitution on property rights. As she has stated, in Vancouver the Attorneys General of the provinces and the Attorney General of Canada, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) agreed to establish a working group to look at the implications of entrenchment. Whether it be native groups, women or people concerned about the environment, there are certain apprehensions that are legitimate that people care about, and we have to put those matters to rest.

I can give the Hon. Member the assurance that the Government remains committed to the entrenchment of property rights into the Constitution and we hope soon to have a report from the working group established by the Attorneys General.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS—NIAGARA RIVER—DIOXIN  
DISCOVERED IN UNITED STATES CHEMICAL DUMP

**Mr. Alan Redway (York East):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, there are some 105 hazardous waste chemical dumps around the shores of the Great Lakes. About 10 of those are located in Canada. All the rest are located on the United States side of the Great Lakes. About five of those chemical dumps are serious, serious problems.

Up until recently, generally speaking, one would think there might only be four serious chemical dump sites along the Niagara River on the American side. Recently, however, another one has been identified, the Necco Park site which is owned by the Dupont Company. The other four which have been identified for some time are the Love Canal site, the S area dump, the Hyde Park site and the 102nd Street dump, all, as I have indicated, on the American side of the Niagara River.

Just about a week ago, dioxin was identified as being located in the 102nd Street dump. That dump contains about 22 acres. It stretches along the Niagara River for about 300 metres, or almost 1,000 feet. It contains, as I understand it, about 123,000 tonnes of hazardous waste chemicals, chemicals put there by the Olin Corporation and the Occidental Chemical Corporation, formerly known as Hooker Chemical. They were dumped at this site between 1948 and 1970. In 1970 the United States Government ordered the dumping to stop at the 102nd Street site because the river bank was starting to erode.

● (1810)

Within the last two weeks it has been discovered that this site contained TCDD dioxin, which is considered to be the

deadliest synthetic chemical of all time to date. In the 102nd Street dump, dioxin has been identified at a level of 630 parts per billion. That is just below the level already identified in the Love Canal site. It has been established for some time that at least some of these chemical dumps, including Love Canal and Hyde Park, are oozing chemicals through the soil which are slowly draining down the Niagara gorge into the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence River.

It apparently has not yet been established whether the dioxin from the 102nd Street dump is also leaking into the Niagara River. In response to my question to the Minister on February 24, he denied that any dioxin from the 102nd Street dump was leaking into the Niagara River and Lake Ontario. That may be so, Mr. Speaker, but it is somewhat difficult to comprehend when all of these other dumps are apparently leaking chemicals and, therefore, must be leaking dioxin because dioxin is soluble and carried by solvents. Therefore, it goes without saying that dioxin is following the path of these other chemicals down the gorge into the river and into the lake.

It is said that a mere shovelful of dioxin could destroy the drinking water in Lake Ontario for virtually all time. It would make it unfit for drinking for the 4 million Canadians who draw their drinking water from Lake Ontario. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there was a general proposal made to Canada by the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States for cleaning up all of these dumps along the Niagara River. That proposal was put to the Canadian Government some time prior to the Christmas break. To the best of my knowledge, there has not, as yet, been any public response by the Canadian Government to that proposal. In addition, a specific proposal was made with regard to the Hyde Park dump. There has, as yet, been no public response to that by the Canadian Government.

The Canadian Government has stated several times that it wants, not only to contain the chemicals in those dumps, but to actually destroy them. There are methods used in other countries for doing just that. There is one method used in the Netherlands and another in West Germany. Experiments have been performed at Queens University for destroying chemicals of this nature rather than just containing them in dump sites where they can ooze through the ground and, inevitably, contaminate drinking water.

It is time that we took some action on this. It is time that we at least made public our responses to the general proposals made by the U.S. for a clean-up. It is time we made a response to the specific proposals made to the U.S. courts concerning the Hyde Park clean-up. It seems to me that tonight, at long last, we should be hearing from the Parliamentary Secretary exactly what Environment Canada intends to do with respect to the sites.

● (1815)

**Mr. G. M. Gurbín (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, it is a Herculean task to try and respond to those specific questions, but there are some