

*Adjournment Debate*

produce marketed to Canadians in all parts of the country. It has now been shown to be in danger of a disastrous overloading of various highly toxic wastes, many of which are known to be lethal to man.

One must stop to think what long-term and short-term effects these chemicals and contaminants will have on the health of the people who now live near the Niagara and future generations who will continue to make their homes there. Stronger measures must be taken now in order that we may protect these Canadians and preserve that which we will hand down to our children in future generations. We must ensure that the Niagara is not subjected to these great amounts of pollutants in the future, in order to preserve and protect our children's futures.

● (2205)

What can the Canadian government say it is doing to solve this problem and to protect the wellbeing of its citizens? It is imperative that all levels of our government work together in a concentrated effort to clean up these sources of pollution to the river and prevent further disintegration of the system from new sources.

But this is not enough. The Canadian government must work with the government of the United States in a joint venture and in a bilateral effort in order for any serious changes to work. Canada and the United States, as signatories to the Great Lakes water quality agreement, have the tools for co-operation and must continue to work together toward reducing the influx of pollutants into our Great Lakes. Without this joint concern and co-operation, all of our efforts are fruitless.

It is surely not too late for us to act upon these problems. Surely we can reverse the present levels of contamination into the Niagara River and subsequently into the Great Lakes.

I should like to congratulate the Toronto *Sunday Star* for drawing this serious problem to the attention of Canadians. Its editorial motivated me, as a Member of Parliament, to raise this issue in the House of Commons. No government can ignore these problems or their effect on our society and we, as concerned Canadians, must endeavour in every possible way to eliminate such destruction of our natural resources.

Canadians have a right to know what constructive action the governments on both sides of the border have taken and plan to take in the future to clean up all sources of contamination along the Niagara River and the Great Lakes.

I am a little disappointed that opposition members on the Conservative side are poking fun at such a serious problem. Shame!

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** It is a good thing you don't read the *Toronto Star* comics.

**Mr. Kempling:** He is on the comic page anyway.

**Mr. Roger Simmons (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the**

**Environment):** Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my good friend, the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park (Mr. Flis), for raising this issue and also my good friend, the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Mr. MacBain), for having pursued the issue over a number of months. This is an issue which concerns all of us in this House.

The International Joint Commission report on pollution in the Niagara River contains quite a number of specific recommendations for joint U.S.-Canadian programs. These recommendations include the establishment of a comprehensive and co-ordinated study of the total Niagara River system, including the identification of sources of contaminants, implementation of control programs and monitoring their effectiveness.

These major recommendations have already been acted upon for some time. Environment Canada has had a comprehensive surveillance and monitoring program in the Niagara River for many years. This program was strengthened in 1979, with the result that the Niagara River is the most intensively monitored portion of the Great Lakes system today. As a result of this effort, a federal-provincial report on the environmental quality of the Niagara River was released in 1980. I am pleased to note that the IJC has relied heavily on the data compiled by Canadian agencies in its report.

As early as last April, Canadian federal and provincial officials met with officials of New York State and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to work jointly on identifying specific sources of contaminants to the river and on the development of controls and monitoring requirements. More recently this co-operative effort has taken shape, as the Niagara River Toxics Committee is charged specifically to map direct and indirect discharges to the river and waste disposal sites suspected of having an impact in the area, to undertake an over-all assessment of the total pollution to the river, to advise on reported controls and to evaluate their effectiveness.

The International Joint Commission is also concerned about any additional discharges to the river which would increase the input of contaminants not only to the river but also to Lake Ontario. This has been our concern for some time now, and it is for this reason we have urged that SCA discharges not take place until its existing problems upstream have been adequately resolved. The Minister of State for Science and Technology and the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts) has addressed this issue with American officials on a number of occasions.

Finally, Environment Canada is paying particular attention to the difficulties being experienced on the U.S. side of the river. We are actively encouraging investigations into past disposal practices and into resolving existing discharge problems, especially with respect to the Niagara Falls, New York, sewage treatment plant.

Once again I thank the hon. member for Parkdale-High Park for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.