

Adjournment Debate

Program and policy development has been ongoing. Twenty-six million used tires are discarded each year in Canada. About 20 per cent of those 26 million tires are recuperated through second hand sales and recycling the rubber into floor mats. That leaves 20 million to 21 million used tires to be disposed of in other ways. Even before the Hagersville fire in February, Environment Canada was funding research projects into alternative uses for scrap tires.

Following the Hagersville fire, all environment ministers agreed at a meeting in Vancouver to set up a federal-provincial working group to review scrap tire storage management, disposal and processing. That working group, chaired by the Ontario minister, met over the summer and its final report will be considered by ministers at the November 28 and 29 meeting of the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers. The working group was also to look at interim guidelines for outdoor storage of tires. It should be noted that Quebec and Ontario have already taken action following the tire fires in their jurisdiction.

Reuse and recycling of these scrap tires is the long-term answer being sought by the federal and provincial governments. In the short term, Environment Canada is looking closely at cement kilns as a method for disposing of used tires.

The use of cement kilns was the subject of a special half day workshop at the recent Canadian Waste Management Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland. If all cement kilns were to utilize used tires for 20 per cent of their energy needs, their capacity would be sufficient to use all the incoming flow of tires. Information provided by the industry suggests that no increase in emissions is expected from the utilisation of used tires as an alternative fuel. This claim will be verified by conducting certified combustion testing.

As well, the associate committee on the National Fire Code, sponsored by the National Research Council, is developing guidelines for outdoor storage of used tires. The committee is reviewing existing international regulations applicable to outside storage of scrap tires to see what can be applied to Canada.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I think it is particularly relevant that the questions being raised tonight all deal with the issue of the environment.

I remember in 1988, just prior to the last election, the Prime Minister came into the Hamilton area and visited the Canada Centre for Inland Waters. He stated that his number one priority over the next number of years was going to be the environment. Since then we have had the debacle of the tire fires.

When the member says that 20 per cent of the tires are being recycled, in fact, there is technology available that could use all of those tires. They are currently being shipped to the United States, ground up to be used in combination with building materials for roads, and shipped back to Canada. Why, as Canadians, are we not taking advantage of the recycling of our tires and of new technology in building our road surfaces? Why are we leaving that to the Americans?

I asked to have leave under this particular section of the act because I was extremely dissatisfied with another environmental question that the government dealt with last spring. That question dealt with the issue of acid rain.

For a number of years the Prime Minister has been promising trans-border action on acid rain. We know that the U.S. Clean Air Act has passed and we are still waiting for action from this Prime Minister and this government on the issue of trans-border acid rain. Acid rain does not carry a passport. Even though we welcome the initiatives of the U.S. Clean Air Act, we are extremely concerned that unless there is a bilateral agreement negotiated between Canada and the United States to supplement that of the U.S. Clean Air Act and Canadian initiatives, we will continue to see Canada rained down upon by American acid rain.

• (1820)

If we examine the government's environmental record, even as we speak today, Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians from coast to coast were shocked to hear that the Minister of the Environment and the government have actually applied for a stay to their own injunction on the construction of the Rafferty—Alameda. The Minister of the Environment staked his reputation on the fact that he was going to talk tough to the Saskatchewan government on this particular issue and, as in so many other tests, he has caved in.