

*Supply*

downwind of Canada, and since Canada is downwind to 26 million tonnes of U.S. waste, let us come to a treaty. This treaty was spelled out as an incipient concept in 1980 when the memorandum of intent was signed between Canada and the U.S. by a Canadian Liberal Government and a U.S. Democrat Government.

It is best to speak plainly with your neighbour, Mr. Speaker, and to put forward Canadian interests instead of crawling on your belly, going down on your knees with ashes on your head. This is what the Prime Minister did in anticipation of the Shamrock meeting when he said: "We are the culprits; please forgive us. *Mea culpa*". It was nonsense. It gave away our bargaining position. We have a 50 per cent reduction program in place; the Americans have none. We have a commitment to cut by 30 per cent by 1993; the Americans have none. We are delivering the goods; they are not. What is the point of being on our knees when we have a legitimate national, domestic interest?

● (1130)

**Mr. Keeper:** Mr. Speaker, could the former Minister of the Environment let us know how we can take seriously his new-found piety in the area of the environment, given the fact that when he was in office he had an opportunity to put in place effective regulations which would deal with the transportation of dangerous goods and would have prevented the PCBs disaster that has just taken place? How can this former Minister stand and talk in a self-righteous manner about the environment?

**Mr. Caccia:** Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to answer the question. It comes from someone who has never been in government and will never be in government. He does not know the reality of obtaining support for a very complex piece of legislation and then drafting regulations which will be acceptable to 10 provincial Governments, to the two Territories, and to the industry itself which just last week was still complaining about inadequate consultations. It was a very difficult process. It was under the jurisdiction of one of my colleagues who pushed very hard for it, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy). If the process took a long time, it was because it was a complicated one. However, it was achieved. It was brought to a conclusion. There is no double standard on this. The fact of the matter is that we have the law and the regulations. Now we have to wait for the provinces to catch up with us by July 1.

**Mr. Keeper:** Mr. Speaker, the former Minister said that he took action on the environment. Sure, he took action, but that action was ineffective. How could he talk about taking action which allowed for the PCB disaster that we have just experienced? How could he call that action effective?

**Mr. Caccia:** The Hon. Member is not listening carefully. The action was effective because it produced a law. The action was effective because it produced a set of federal regulations. The action will be effective once the provinces dovetail their

regulations with ours. The goods have been delivered, although it took a long time.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The period for questions and comments is terminated.

[Translation]

Debate resumed. The Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier).

**Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think I really have to comment on what the former Minister of the Environment said, since his credibility is not very high as it is and the events are self-explanatory.

Mr. Speaker, the incident at Kenora which resulted in the spilling of PBCs on the highway over more than 70 kilometers, and which involved a number of individuals including a young couple with two young children, was quite dramatic, especially since it could easily have been avoided. There was probably some human error involved, but I like to think that there was no criminal negligence. However, I would not want to anticipate the conclusions of the special investigators or any other authorities who will be asked to give their assessment.

I have already said publicly that within hours of this dramatic incident, I got in touch with my Ontario counterpart, the Hon. Morley Kells, Minister of the Environment. I have remained in constant touch with him in order to evaluate on an ongoing basis reports of the various intervenors in this case, although it is mainly a provincial responsibility.

I have also given instructions to my departmental officials to communicate with the principal health officer for the Province of Ontario and offer any assistance my department might be able to add to what is being done by the Government of Ontario, either to the family or to experts already involved in this case or to other individuals who might have come into contact with the PCB's. Later on in my speech I intend to elaborate on the action taken most recently by my department in this case. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I merely wish to say that notwithstanding the claims of the Opposition, this action has been frequent and always in accordance with our specific responsibilities.

In fact, the role and responsibilities of the provinces and the Federal Government in such situations are clearly defined in our emergency procedures, and it is therefore, both desirable and essential that each party act according to these procedures and stick to its assigned role to prevent any confusion in a situation that requires quick, sensible and effective action. The procedures are aimed at keeping the number of individuals on the spot, in case of an emergency, at a minimum, for efficiency's sake. The principal role in this particular situation is played by Ontario, which has acted with the requisite speed and taken charge of the emergency procedures, as was indeed its responsibility.