

The Address—Mr. Collenette

the lakes from us, and control on an international basis is a complicated matter, indeed. The former minister responsible for the environment considered acid rain one of the priorities of his ministry, and initiated the first international air pollution agreement with the United States late last year. I trust that this issue will be accorded the same importance by the new government and that no precious time is lost due to the change in government.

● (2150)

The pollution of the Niagara River continues to be a matter of real irritation to many on both sides of the river. Just recently we went through the troublesome time of granting a permit to a corporation in upper New York state, and yet this corporation would discharge its treated industrial waste into the river. It is my opinion that, although there must be at all times stringent controls on such programs as SCAs, such projects divert attention from other major fouling sources. Millions of gallons of waste, subject only to primary treatment, are being discharged daily into the Niagara River by riverside municipalities as well as by local industry. If as much zest were applied to the cleaning up of these sources as has been applied in controlling SCAs contribution, we would greatly improve the present condition of the Niagara River. Action against these older pollutants must be taken.

This is a crucial time in our country's history, Mr. Speaker. We are heavily in debt. We are in the grips of an unprecedented rate of inflation. We are heavily dependent on other countries for our technology and for our capital. We are lacking any kind of clear energy policy for our future. We are divided socially, and we are fragmented politically. If ever there were a time when this country needed strong, reliable leadership, it is now. The problems of this nation have been long identified.

The Liberal government now has the majority it needs to get on with the job. For the sake of our country's future, let there be no further delays and let there be no further misunderstanding at home or abroad.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as you know, according to the House order the allotted time for a speech is 20 minutes. The hon. member has not finished, but I understand that you, sir, are adhering strictly to that rule. I regret that the hon. member did not get a chance to finish his remarks.

This is the first time I have had an opportunity to address the chamber in a formal way in this Parliament, other than on points of order dealing with House business. It gives me great pleasure to talk on the seventh day of the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion, the hon. member for Rimouski (Mrs. Côté), and the hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Frith). To you, Mr. Speaker, and to your

cohorts in the Speaker's chair, I wish you every best wish and success for this parliamentary term.

I would like to associate myself with the words spoken this evening by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) and the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Irwin), who spoke about the emotional commitment that people have toward keeping this country together. In particular, the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie gave a perspective from my province of Ontario. I would like to associate myself in particular with those emotional sentiments that he put forth.

However, I want to take more of a hard-nosed and practical look at what the referendum means to people in Ontario. There have been articles in various newspapers saying that Ontario is asleep, that English Canada is asleep and is not really paying too much attention to what is going on in Quebec. That could not be farther from the truth. In my constituency office on Saturdays I meet with people, as do all hon. members. Many of them have indicated to me that there is a genuine disquiet, an anxiety on the part of the people in metropolitan Toronto, and I am sure it is throughout the rest of the province of Ontario, as to what will be the outcome of the vote next Tuesday.

There are definite feelings. Perhaps people are not writing letters to newspaper editors or they are not making a lot of noise, but they are in deep thought about the ramifications this vote will have for the future and integrity of the country. As a member from Ontario I would like to talk about Ontario's role after the referendum, no matter how the question turns out. I believe, according to the recent indications of support which seem to be gathering, that the No forces will win.

But what will happen after the referendum is of crucial importance to this country. Ontario has had too much of its own way for too long. We have been called the fat cat of confederation, the engine of confederation, or the one who has benefited most from confederation. That is the truth. That position has changed, is changing, and must change if this country is to survive. As a member from Ontario, I am prepared to go back to my constituency in the next election and talk about the new kind of Canada that we must create.

I want to talk about resources in that context but I do not know if I will have time this evening. Since we may not come back to this debate before next Tuesday, I would like to talk in particular about the whole question of enshrining minority language rights and minority rights in general in a new constitution. About two years ago, prior to the May, 1979, election, I remember sitting next to Premier Blakeney as I was flying back to Toronto. We had a very enlightening conversation about his attitude toward not entrenching minority language rights in the constitution. The friendly debate lasted all the way back to Toronto. It was Mr. Hatfield's contention that language rights and minority rights in general can best be safeguarded by legislatures.

It is my contention that that could not be farther from the truth. I think that this is a vital component, a question that has to be answered in the whole referendum debate. This is what bothers Quebecers. I think that they are looking down the