

Oral Questions

had legislation in preparation. We know about this kind of "might have been". That is what the Leader of the Opposition is—a great might have been.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: "Might have been Joe".

Mr. Clark: Better than a fraud.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**PROPOSED WASTE DISPOSAL SITE AT SOUTH CAYUGA, ONT.**

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. The minister will recall that on December 9 last I raised a question pertaining to the announced intention of the province of Ontario to transport all their industrial toxic waste through the populated heartland of southern Ontario and dispose of it on agricultural land in the Niagara Peninsula lying between Lake Erie and the Grand River. The minister informed me at that time that his department would look into the matter and inform me at a later date. I would ask the minister now if this matter has been looked into and, if so, what decision has been arrived at by his department.

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, it is true that my department is aware of the proposals and has looked into them. In some ways I am naturally tempted to respond to the hon. member that he himself should get in touch with the government of Ontario directly, which is, of course, a government formed by members of his party. That government has the basic responsibility for the determination of disposal sites within the province.

I could say to him, however, since he has asked for a comment from me, that it is my view that it would probably be preferable if the government of Ontario were to establish a general policy on the criteria and conditions which should be applied to the location of those sites before determining the individual sites which are to be found, rather than to proceed in an ad hoc way looking at one site and another. I am reluctant, Madam Speaker, and you will understand why, to be overly critical of the activities of the government of Ontario in this regard. In a general way we recognize that there is a need to find sites for the safe disposal of hazardous waste, and also in a general way, through the meetings of the Council of Resource and Environment Ministers, we have promised to co-operate as much as we possibly can with that process.

Mr. Bradley: Madam Speaker, I have been in contact with the provincial government of Ontario, as have many other concerned people in the province. My supplementary question is also for the Minister of the Environment. There is a sense of urgency about the matter. In spite of the fact that 46 com-

munities have supported the town of Dunnville and the region of Haldimand-Norfolk in their resolution requesting an adequate environmental assessment and hearing into this matter, the province has ignored their pleas and has announced the initiation of expropriation procedures. The concern felt in the Lake Erie area now, Madam Speaker, is not about acid rain but the possibility of acid drain.

I would ask the minister of the government supports proper environmental assessment and hearings on issues as important nationally as toxic waste disposal. If so, will it take whatever steps are available to it to ensure that the people of southern Ontario, and all people in the lower Great Lakes area, are properly protected against the potential of Love Canals in Canada through proper environmental assessment and hearings?

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, clearly I am sympathetic to the concerns that the hon. member has expressed, but I am sure he would be one of the first in the House to protest if I were to take actions which were to pre-empt the legitimate responsibilities of the provinces. We are concerned in this area to proceed in conjunction with, and with the co-operation of, provincial governments. It seems to me that up to this point that has shown itself to be the most effective way in which we can proceed. On several occasions I have talked with or written to or been in communication with the provincial governments to draw to their attention our concerns about the necessity of detecting or finding possible locations of past dump sites which presently constitute a hazard to ecology or to human health. The response from some governments, and I would have to say the response from the government of Ontario, has been very supportive and forthcoming; it is less so, perhaps, on the part of some other provinces. As a result, I have indicated that I intend to raise this matter at the next meeting of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers.

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COMMUNICATIONS**LICENCE RENEWALS AND TRANSFERS—PROVISION OF POLICY GUIDELINES**

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, I am sorry that the Minister of Communications is not with us this afternoon; I intended to raise a series of questions with him on this particular matter. Perhaps they could be taken as notice or I would welcome a reply from any minister who responds for him.

The minister's department commissioned what was known as the Babe-Slayton report concerning licence renewals and transfers. One of the things that the report did was to lambaste private TV broadcasters for failing to comply with the aims of the Broadcasting Act. It further called for competitive licensing procedures in transfer situations or in renewal situations as one means of making stations live up to their promises regarding Canadian programming.