

the original size. In co-operation with the Province of Ontario, we are taking the necessary positive steps to reduce this degradation even further. It is clear that we are threatened less now than we were then, but we still have a long way to go. We can only take the next steps in a co-operative fashion with all Governments at all levels.

Consider the areas of concern described by the Water Quality Board of the IJC in its 1985 report. The Governments of Canada and the U.S. have agreed to take a methodical, step-by-step approach to cleaning up these areas of concern. The steps agreed to include the full description of the problem, the development of concise action plans with specific dates and targets, and the monitoring of the situation after these action plans have been implemented in order to establish that the desired conditions in the areas of concern have been restored. We are on that step-by-step route for most of the areas concerned in the Great Lakes Basin. We must all co-operate to see this process through to success. We must not throw adversarial hurdles in our path.

Hamilton Harbour is one of the areas of concern described in the Great Lakes Water Quality Board report. There is little to be proud of in the emissions at Hamilton Harbour, but even this degraded area is on the relentless path to renewal. We have to help the process with co-operative and positive action, not negativism.

To this end, we have invited the IJC to play an even larger role in our work. It has the authority, both under the Boundary Waters Treaty Act and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978, to look at our standards, laws and regulations and to assess them as to their adequacy on both sides of the border in order to resolve the common problems in the Great Lakes Basin. We are so confident in the successes which we have achieved in the Niagara River area this week that we are inviting the IJC to look at our plan to restore the quality of that area of the Great Lakes Basin.

I said at the outset that the Hon. Member's resolution is both timely and redundant. Since the U.S. Government recognizes its obligations under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the actions it is taking with us are timely, let us not divide our energies and be conquered. In the field of international agreements, the pen is surely mightier than the barbed tongue. The prophet of gloom is doomed.

There is one other point I would like to add from a technical point of view in discussing this subject. The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), in considering excavation versus the alternatives for the dumpsites, left out one critical factor. Having established that our preferred option would be to dig all this stuff up and get rid of it somewhere, we have to at the same time recognize the reality of needing to get on with the job as quickly as possible and doing it most effectively.

There is a technical aspect which is difficult for everyone to grasp. No one knows for sure, nor can they until additional work has been done and assessments made. The problem is that we know we must contain so far as possible whatever

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chemicals there are in whatever area. Having been there for so many years, you can see the chemicals oozing out of the walls along the side of the Niagara Gorge. You can see the rot coming out. Chemicals have leached through bedrock and, even if there were excavation of many of those sites, it would still represent a continual and considerable environmental problem.

One of the options, which may or may not be real because it has yet to be determined, is that by removing the water and the contaminants therein contained, we may be able to reverse that leaching process. Instead of going toward the river, it would come back toward the dumpsite. It could then be removed and destroyed. That would be a technique which would have obvious advantages as opposed to simple excavation, and still being left with the problem of having to destroy the materials we have removed.

With that additional technical point, I think the House would want to recognize the ongoing interest of the Hon. Member for Davenport, but would like to suggest that he look at those agreements again. I think there has been a serious oversight in his estimation of what is contained in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreements of 1972 and 1978, and what they really mean. Second, insofar as possible with whatever information we can give him, he should be in a position to look at the realities of technology and what is real and what is not.

• (1610)

Finally, through assessment, and this gives me confidence as a Member of Government and as someone who is paying as close attention as he can to this matter, I think we have the start of solid action here for the first time in a long time. We have in place, through solid agreement, the mechanisms and the best technology available to make sure that the agreements are adhered to and that our efforts are effective. If they are not, we obviously have to take other action.

Mr. Caccia: I want to reassure the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, who has given us a fine speech according to a well prepared text, that I have looked closely at the agreements. That is what makes me say that the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan), if he had done the same, would not need to go cap in hand to Washington in order to obtain the co-operation of our neighbours on this matter.

Having said that, I would like the Parliamentary Secretary to look at his own press release, the one issued in Washington on May 14, and provide me with an answer to my question. The press statement recognizes that the administrator and the Minister agreed it is necessary to achieve significant reductions in the loadings of toxic chemicals in the Niagara River, which is a great statement, as you know, because it was made a year before by the predecessor of the present Minister of the Environment. It indicates the two had agreed on co-ordinating the existing chemical pollutant control activities in establishing a common basis for assessing the toxic chemicals, loadings, et cetera. It mentions, in identifying priorities for control measures, evaluating the success of these measures, which are