

Oral Questions

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of the Environment.

The green plan establishes as Conservative federal policy the right of corporations to pollute Canada's fresh and salt water and rejects the right of Canadian citizens to have unpolluted fish to eat, to have unpolluted water to drink and to have unpolluted beaches for swimming.

Would the minister explain to this House why he chose to agree in cabinet with the minister responsible for privatization and tore up the chapter on water rights when the green plan was before cabinet?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to underline for my hon. colleague that there was no chapter torn up in any way, shape or form.

We are dedicated to moving towards a healthy environment. I would like to say that there are some rather potent tools to do that if we do not get the co-operation that I believe we will. I would like to remind my colleague that under some legislation I believe he supported, that should we not, there are fines of \$1 million a day for somebody who goes against the environmental regulations that we have in place.

There are potential penalties in terms of jail sentences of five years per infraction. That will ensure, if everything else fails, that we will go ahead and ensure a healthy environment for all Canadians.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

I am sure he is aware that he is required, by law, to report annually on the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. He is in violation of the law right now while he sits here in this Chamber. He has not got a job.

However, my supplementary is for the Prime Minister who solemnly signed a treaty with the United States with his friend, President Reagan, three years ago regarding Great Lakes water quality which called for and required zero discharge of toxics into the Great Lakes.

The quality of the Great Lakes has continued to decline from the discharge of toxics from both sides. Will the Prime Minister tell this House and Canadians when the principle of zero discharge will be extended to all Canadian waters, and when will it be enforced even in the Great Lakes?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Minister of the Environment has already responded very fully to that and other questions raised by my hon. friend. He has provided very detailed answers.

With the exception of some people who are really captives of interest groups in this country, most Canadians recognize the tremendous job that the Minister of the Environment has done.

Inasmuch as my socialist friend made reference in a comment on an involvement with President Reagan on the environment, perhaps I could refer him to another comment made by the socialist Prime Minister of Norway and chair of the Brundtland commission.

• (1440)

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: You're not a captive?

Mr. Mulroney: Mrs. Brundtland is recognized as one of the leading environmentalists in the world. The NDP does not want to hear it, but Mrs.—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McCurdy: How about answering the question.

Mr. Langdon: Answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I, along with my colleagues on the other side, are somewhat astonished, but having made such a big deal of the environment today, and having raised President Reagan, my hon. friends do not want to hear one of the world's leading environmentalists, Mrs. Brundtland, who was speaking to the issue that is before the House.

Here is what Mrs. Brundtland said. The socialists should listen to a fellow socialist.

There is the leadership role that Canada plays in international affairs and in particular in the ongoing work of sustainable development.

There is Mr. Mulroney's personal commitment to the issues and the unique way he has mobilized industry, science and private organizations in his own country to work together, creating a strong cross-sectoral movement in Canada.

I always believed there were some socialists who knew what they were talking about.