

Supply

because I support him, not because I think what he did was right or wrong, but I do not think it helps the Canadian cause to create an argument in Canada over what is the appropriate way to deal with the issue.

I would say the same thing to the Minister in Ontario, that it does not help our cause to have an argument on the floor of the House of Commons over whether or not one or the other of the Ministers can be trusted.

Mr. McMillan: That was the question.

Mr. Deans: It could have been answered in a different way.

Mr. McMillan: That's the answer.

Mr. Deans: If that's the answer, well, fair enough. Remember when you start that it goes on *ad nauseam* and causes us in Canada to look stupid, quite frankly. It could have been answered better, if you will allow me, and briefer too for that matter.

Did the Minister get some inkling as to how the technology proposed by Mr. Thomas will work, when he proposes to be able to start utilizing it, and how many dollars have been committed by the United States administration to this on an annual basis for the next five years?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): On a very short answer, the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan).

Mr. McMillan: I must say, for someone who wanted short responses, he ensured that I would have a difficult time acceding to his request by weaving into his question three separate, highly technical considerations. The simple answer is we have begun, the two sides have already begun.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Point of order, the Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate (Mr. Baker).

Mr. Baker: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think it is the opinion of the House that we allow the Minister to answer the question as completely as the House wishes and not be limited by time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): If the Hon. Member from Gander—Twillingate is putting that proposition to the House, is there unanimous consent to permit the Minister to answer?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Agreed, unanimous consent.

Mr. McMillan: There is some impression, created in part by the Hon. Member's colleagues, that somehow the plan that we have agreed to would not begin to be implemented until July of 1987. That is not true, we have begun already. We set 1995 as the target date by which we hope to achieve a 50 per cent reduction. There is a lot more science needed to be mobilized

to identify the exact toxins in the river, and the different sources. We know enough to justify action, but we do not know enough to define the date and the percentage with the kind of precision we require.

By July, 1987, we hope to be in a position, following all the scientific mobilization we will set in motion, to specify with more certitude the 1995 date and 50 per cent reduction. We hope it may be earlier than 1995, and we hope the reduction will be larger than 50 per cent. How much is it going to cost? It is going to cost tens of millions of dollars. We cannot put a price tag on it.

Mr. Deans: I asked how much has been committed on an annual basis?

Mr. McMillan: This is the typical, if I may so, NDP approach. If it does not have a price tag, it is not effective. What we are talking about is the full mobilization of the scientific and technical resources of the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the Government of New York State and of the United States Government itself. How do you put a price tag on that kind of mobilization? How do you do it?

Mr. Deans: That wasn't the question. I didn't ask you to put a price tag on it. I asked you to tell me how much they committed annually for the next five years for the cleanup?

Mr. McMillan: What is that if that is not a price tag? What is the difference between cost and a price tag? I am saying you cannot quantify the expenditure of money that the foreign Governments are going to have to devote to this cause over at least the next decade.

Mr. Deans: I asked how much they had.

Mr. McMillan: I do not think you could do it even for one year. For example, there are a lot of hidden costs. How do you put a price tag or a cost on the civil servants, the scientists and the technicians within Environment Canada, within Health and Welfare Canada, and within other Departments that are being mobilized within the Government of Canada for our part of the bargain? That is not to say that we cannot, in general, state with some certitude that it is going to cost tens of millions of dollars, and whatever it is going to cost it will be an awful lot less than the cost of not doing anything.

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, a word of advice to the House Leader of the New Democratic Party—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): On a point of order?

Mr. Langdon: Perhaps I misunderstood the request which was being made, but as I heard it, it was that the questioners would be permitted to continue raising questions with the Minister, not that it would apply just to one questioner.