

Adjournment Debate

not right, then we can question whether the Minister really tried to fight for the institution. It was not only a federal decision, it involved the Province, universities and the private sector. The Government talks blithely about involving the private sector. The private sector was willing to provide substantial funds for this project. We must wonder whether the Minister knew about the project.

We note daily on our television sets concerns regarding toxins in health, consumer products, industry and manufacturing. The Minister suggested that \$700,000 was being spent on research into toxicology. The people I talked to at the University of Guelph said that they would be surprised if there was even 10 per cent of that amount. There may be \$700,000 in research but certainly not \$700,000 a year for research into toxicology.

● (1805)

This Government blithely talks about consultation. I defy the Minister to say there was consultation with the University of Guelph, the University of Toronto, the Province of Ontario or private industry before the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) stood in his place and cancelled this institution. There simply was no consultation.

When we combine the cut-backs in the Canadian Wildlife Service and the cut-backs in monitoring of toxins in Lake Ontario and other places, Mr. Speaker, we see a government which is not dedicated to preserving the environment. Certainly it is not interested in the development of the University of Guelph or the University of Toronto in that regard. It is certainly not a friend of those universities or the City of Guelph in this whole matter because there were some 160 jobs involved in this project over the long haul. I just hope the Minister will reconsider this action and re-establish this institution.

[Translation]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity of responding to the Hon. Member opposite. I stand by the figures I have indicated to this House these last few days, and here are additional data that certainly should be of interest to my hon. colleague.

In its 1982 study of federal programs on toxic chemicals, the Treasury Board made known the following facts: During the fiscal year 1981-82, more than 2,600 person-years and \$143 million were committed, of which 450 person-years and \$20 million were for research purposes.

Twenty four government departments have undertaken research work on toxic chemicals in compliance with 58 acts of Parliament.

One item that was criticized by the study was the lack of an overall, consistent program in that area. There was concern among other things about work duplication, and apparently no overall policy or priority had been developed in that respect.

Major recommendations were made in that study, namely the need for a consistent, coordinated and efficient harmonization of efforts, through the establishment of a Canadian inter-departmental committee on toxic chemicals.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, this Government has absolutely no intention of withdrawing from or relinquishing its important role in the area of studies and research on toxic chemicals.

But again let me say that the \$16 million the Canadian Government would have invested in the building of the Guelph Centre were indeed millions of dollars that would have been going into construction work rather than into actual research activities.

Therefore, it is false to suggest that Canadian research and expertise on toxic chemicals are reduced by such a cut. Quite the opposite, we are still increasing our funding for the building of such expert research facilities, and we are committed to increasing that research expertise on toxic chemicals, despite the difficulties resulting from the current economic situation.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, there should be an end to all that ideological nonsense with respect to that matter, and there should also be an end to the efforts to scare Canadians into believing this is being curtailed.

● (1810)

NATIONAL PARKS—EMPLOYMENT AT KOUCHIBOUGUAC NATIONAL PARK, N.B. (B) INQUIRY CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT FOR LAID-OFF WORKERS

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question on November 16 of this year was directed to the Hon. Minister of the Environment and concerned employment at Kouchibouguac National Park.

The Park's history goes back several years, when, in order to create the park, it was necessary to expropriate some 200 families, and subsequently force them to move. Mr. Speaker, this was not a very happy time in our history. Of course, compensation was received for loss of property and for moving expenses, but more important, promises were made and especially a commitment that things would improve. Commitment is the key word here. A commitment was made to create jobs for these people who had been forced to move out. Since then we have been able to employ about 200 people every year, and I am referring to seasonal workers, not to the government employees responsible for park administration. Seasonal employees are mostly engaged in various construction projects such as walkways to the beaches, nature paths, camping and picnic areas, ski huts, and so forth.

Much remains to be done. Work on park facilities is still going on. In fact, we could employ about 200 seasonal workers for several years more, and seasonal jobs are very much in demand. Kouchibouguac National Park is the main employer in this area and has been for some time.