

*Adjournment Debate*

● (1800)

**PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT  
MOTION**

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS—TOXIC CHEMICAL CONTROL  
PROGRAM. (B) REQUEST THAT PROGRAM BE RENEWED**

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, a few years ago it was determined by the Liberal Government that the management of toxic chemicals by the Department of the Environment was a priority of national importance in Canada. The Toxic Chemicals Management Program which was instituted dealt with all the human activities which have the potential to alter nature, and the amounts or distribution of chemicals in the environment which adversely affect human beings, other life forms, ecosystems and renewable resources.

In 1985, it appears that the management of toxic chemicals by the Department of the Environment has ceased to be a priority of national importance. As of April 1, 1985, the Toxic Chemicals Management Program ceased to exist.

When I asked the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier) on April 23 why this program was cancelled, she answered: "It was a temporary one and is now included in my Main Estimates". In our research we found that the Estimates of the Environmental Protection Service have been reduced from last year by \$6.4 million and that the personnel has been reduced from last year by 41 persons.

In light of the cuts to the service, I must ask the Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary whether the Toxic Chemicals Management Program still has the same program funds to work with as it did prior to April 1.

It appears that what we have is another cut, through the back door, surreptitiously camouflaged by the Minister when she pretends that the program in question has been "included in my Main Estimates". How can the Minister say that when the budget of the Environmental Protection Service for this year has been cut by \$6.4 million and the personnel has been cut by 41 persons?

I must gently reproach the Parliamentary Secretary for having failed to arrange for a scrutiny by members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry to analyse the Estimates. The month of April has passed, we are now in May, and nothing of that kind has yet been arranged. Therefore, we are forced to use the "late show" to discuss that budget.

In checking the Estimates we could not find the following important components of the Toxic Chemicals Management Program which existed last year. One of the components was a three-year action plan on matters such as drinking water, dioxins, pesticides, indoor air quality and contaminants in fish. As well, we could not find the component which dealt with the development of a federal plan of action for the control of dioxin. Neither could we find the component which would

improve national pesticide management and regulation activities by contributing to the registration of pesticides and by informing the public on the decision-making process with respect to pesticides. There is also the component which has to do with support of the general co-ordinative role, the contribution to meetings of the Canadian Council of Environmental and Resource Ministers on questions related to toxic substances, and the co-ordination of the Department's input to the interdepartmental committee on toxic chemicals as based on a Cabinet document on pesticides which outlines a three-year federal plan of action. These items have disappeared. I submit something fishy is going on because the absence of these components disproves the claim by the Minister that the toxic chemical program came to a "normal end".

● (1805)

In addition, there are cuts in the environmental conservation service of \$5 million and 240 person-years. What is not listed this year in the Estimates for that service is multiple resource conservation which last year had approximately 81 person-years and \$5.2 million. This program undertook research and monitoring of toxic chemicals to ascertain concentrations, transportation, sedimentation and precipitation. In addition, a comprehensive integrated surveillance plan was to be implemented with greater emphasis on radioactive waste disposal. That is gone, too.

Where has this program gone? It is not in the Estimates. Why has toxic chemical research become less a priority today than it was last year? Why is the Government cutting the research needed to solve the severe problems posed by toxic chemicals? What the population along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River is losing is the essential research needed, without interruption, to determine the flow, quantity and increases of toxic chemicals in our water.

I will conclude by saying that this research is essential. We on this side of the House expect this Government to demonstrate its ability to prevent toxic chemical problems and to undertake responsible management of chemicals. Because of cut-backs which have resulted in the loss of important research programs, the Minister of the Environment should address the concerns of the public regarding the potential health problems associated with contaminated water. I submit that the toxic chemical management program is gone; the Estimates are reduced by 41 person-years in the environment protection service, and 240 person-years in the environment conservation service. How can the Minister claim that a toxic chemical management program is now in the Main Estimates? I ask you.

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) indicated at the beginning of his comments that a number of years ago, I guess that was in the 1970s, the Liberal Government recognized the importance of toxic chemicals. I think that was all well and good, but in recognizing that he must also recognize the way the management of those toxic chemicals was really screwed up by the Liberal Government in