

Oral Questions

Mr. Bradley: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the minister has stated that the government will co-operate with the maritime provinces in setting up a waste disposal site there, how can he turn his back on the concerned people of Ontario?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is both misdirected and misinformed. He should be issuing his beseeching request to his provincial colleagues at Queen's Park who are responsible for the selection of the waste disposal site in southern Ontario.

We have made it clear to the government of Ontario, and to other provincial governments, that we are prepared to consider turning over Crown land if the provincial government felt that would be of some assistance to it in locating waste disposal sites. That kind of question has been discussed both with provincial governments in the west and with provincial governments in the Atlantic provinces. No such request has been received from the province of Ontario.

We are not ignoring the development of the Cayuga site, as the hon. member seems to imply by his question. We have observers at the hearings to try to ensure that if there is any potential damage to the international waterways and interprovincial waterways, we will be fully aware of it and will be able to take remedial action. So far there has been no indication that this is the case.

DISPOSAL OF TOXIC WASTES FROM THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Bud Bradley (Haldimand-Norfolk): I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. If that is the case, the minister should be well aware that this site has not even been decided upon yet. It is not known where it will be located in South Cayuga, nor has it been stated what type of facility will be put in place.

I should like to quote briefly from "Environment Update" as follows, "The toxic chemicals problem is complex. We will need the co-operation of producers, users and governments to ensure the safety and well-being of our population and the environment, and to ensure that the public has the information on this subject to which they are entitled. I am personally determined that these objectives will be met." That was signed by the minister, "John Roberts", Madam Speaker. The minister is saying now that he will not co-operate with governments and will not ensure that the people get the information.

Has the minister received guarantees that toxic waste from the United States of America or other provinces which would make this a federal responsibility, will not be disposed of in South Cayuga? If so, will he table these guarantees and if not, how can he not involve the federal government in order to ensure the safety of its citizens as he promised in his statement?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): I cannot help but conclude, Madam Speaker, that the hon. member was so

intent upon asking his next question that he did not listen to my answer to his first question. I tried to make it clear to him that we are co-operating with provincial governments in the design of waste control management systems throughout the country, but the responsibility for the location of those centres is in the hands of the provincial governments. We are co-operating with them in every area of the country, including Ontario. It is not our responsibility to select those sites. We are prepared to offer assistance and to try to find Crown land and make it available to them if that is convenient for them, but the location responsibilities are theirs.

I shall be happy to send on to the Conservative minister of Ontario the representations which the hon. member has made. At the present time, the border between the United States and Canada is closed to the transshipment of toxic waste. We are not happy with that situation. There are many occasions on which co-operation between the United States and Canada in the disposal and destruction of toxic waste would be beneficial to both sides. We are exploring that matter with the American government, at the behest of the provincial governments, I may add.

The assumptions that underlie the hon. member's question are far from the facts of the situation, and make it difficult to give the hon. member a helpful answer.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ALLOCATION OF TIME TO DEBATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton South): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. A moment ago the hon. member for Davenport, in questioning the government House leader, talked about some combination of days given by the various political parties for a debate in the House on foreign affairs. I should like to ask the Prime Minister why the government does not exercise its responsibility and call a foreign affairs debate, bearing in mind that in the nine years I have been in the House there has only been one such government-sponsored debate. That was in 1977.

Of late the Prime Minister has journeyed around the world dealing with the North-South question, having discussions with world leaders. He has given no leadership to the Canadian Parliament or the people of Canada, however. The economic summit begins six weeks from today. It will be discussing the North-South question, and will be followed by two more summits within a short time. The Canadian people and members of Parliament have been given absolutely no direction by the government.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the hon. member might recall that I answered this question more than a month ago by suggesting, as I believe the hon. member for Davenport was suggesting, that since we all view this as a very important subject, each party should give up one of its days. The opposition parties have several days left before the end of June. The government has a limited number