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economic loss is immeasurable. There is negative leadership in cancelling the Guelph Toxicology Centre, a centre of excellence which would have given Canada a lead role in the world. Would that centre have been cancelled if it had been planned in the Prime Minister's riding? I wonder. There is negative leadership in cancelling renewable energy research at the National Research Centre and the energy saving and conversion programs, while at the same time continuing with a very expensive system of grants to oil companies exploring for conventional energy in the Arctic. That does not make sense.

By looking at this kind of activity, one can also see a failure to confirm the policy in national parks, an established, long-term policy whereby Canadians know that what comes first is the conservation role of national parks and, secondly, tourism. What we see is what I would describe as inaction and wrong decisions. For instance, it was a wrong decision for the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier) to go to Stockholm instead of attending an international conference on acid rain in Quebec City. That was inaction.

It is inaction when the Minister prefers to sit in her office checking whether she is getting work done by officials instead of getting out into the communities to listen and to learn. For instance, after eight months in office she has not yet visited the Niagara River. She has not given leadership on the recommendations published last October by the Niagara River toxic chemicals committee. It is a situation that cries for attention, action and leadership, but all we get from her are pious press releases. Although in office for eight months, the Minister has not yet met with the EPA on this crucial matter. She has allowed the cancellation of the toxic chemicals management program, a badly needed \$2.5 million program to protect the health of Canadians with respect to water in the Great Lakes. Why has she done that, Mr. Speaker?

The Government's obligation of leadership, which is the body and spirit of our motion, is to be found also in fundamental, basic levels of policy-making. There is a failure on the part of this Minister and the Government to recognize that the environment is the foundation of our health. There is a failure to understand and recognize that the environment is the foundation of our economy. Therefore, there is a conceptual incapacity to understand that the environment, health and the economy are one and the same.

● (1115)

In justification of environmental cuts the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier) and the Government speak about "getting our economic house in order first". In doing so they abdicate leadership because they fail to recognize the inescapable reality that our health, the economy, and our lifestyle depend on a well managed environment.

Canadians will not be fooled by the false notion that we must look after the economy at the expense of the environment. Canadians are light years ahead of the Government in their view of the importance of the environment. The economic views uttered by the Minister of the Environment are backward, simplistic, and sheer nonsense. Canadians want the close

relationship between the environment and the economy recognized by the Government. They know that neglect or postponement of preventive and clean-up action in the environment inevitably leads to greater costs in the future. That is economics, Mr. Speaker.

The support that the Minister has in this country can perhaps be counted on the fingers of one hand. She has not yet understood what her job is all about. Canadians want her to be an advocate of the environment. They want her to give a sense of direction at the provincial, national and global levels with non-governmental organizations and volunteer groups. They want her to be an impassioned speaker for our right to live in a healthy environment and to preserve it for future generations. They want to see her out of her office fighting for the environment and advocating the protection of our health, our water, our air and our economy in the long term.

In recent days we have heard a lot about the Charter of Rights. It ensures everyone the right to life, liberty, integrity and security of the person. The time has come to enlarge the interpretation of the notion of the security of the person to mean the right to a healthy environment. It should be declared as a constitutional right of every Canadian. To this end we will soon present a Private Member's Bill. The ineptness and lack of action of the Government in a variety of issues related to the environment is jeopardizing the inherent right of Canadians to health and safety as spelled out in our motion today.

It is becoming clear that Canadians have been fooled by this so-called Progressive Conservative Party. That Party, despite its name, is neither for progress of society as a whole, nor for conservation of our natural environment. The Government does not seem to realize that as long as it thinks about the economy as an entity separate from the environment, the economy as well as the environment will be in jeopardy. That is why the Minister of the Environment is on the wrong track when she talks of putting our economic house in order first. What does she mean by that? She does not know what she is talking about. It is such thought that was manifest 50 years ago when we were not facing scarcity and industrial waste at the rate and proportion we are facing today.

● (1120)

The Minister and the Government seem unaware of this basic, fundamental reality. Human health, the economy and the environment are one and the same. They form a single subject which cannot be separated. I suggest that it is an abdication of leadership not to realize that. Reducing services and eliminating programs is an abdication of leadership. Sitting in an office on the 26th floor of a tower across the river is also an abdication of leadership.

Enough time has elapsed for the Minister to understand the importance of the advocacy role. We all know that in every Government department one must speak for the interests of that department and fight for it. Not performing an advocacy role with passion and commitment at all possible levels is another form of abdication of leadership.