

Statements by Ministers

April 1, in order to intensify and conduct research on the leaking of toxic chemical dump sites into the Niagara River. Of course I am referring, in larger terms, to the broad \$70 million cut in the National Research Council which includes matters related to chemicals and substances affecting human health.

In his statement the Minister focused upon the St. Clair River, but he failed to address the broader question of our international obligations to the Americans under the Great Lakes Water Agreement. That is a very serious flaw in his presentation today. We have an obligation under that agreement to the Americans. We have an obligation to the communities downstream to Sarnia and Windsor and to our native people on Walpole Island. We have an obligation to deliver on the Canadian side of the river because we want the Americans to respect their obligations along the Niagara River where millions of Americans and Canadians are affected by a similar situation. It is only that the chemicals are different.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Caccia: It is the linkage, the overview and the understanding of the totality of the picture in the Minister's statement today that dismay and shock me. The Minister arrived today a few minutes after three o'clock, apologized and expected to be treated in a kind manner both on substance as well as on process. That, Mr. Speaker, we cannot do for him.

● (1530)

Second, there has been a failure on the part of the Minister to recognize that the problem is not that of having a chemical society. We can have a chemical society with the number of chemical products that are produced and still have a clean society. The Minister has not addressed that point, the major point which preoccupies everyone in the country. Responsible companies and institutions can produce chemical products and still ensure that our water and air remain clean.

In his statement, the Minister failed to address the number of incentives that already exist in the Income Tax Act which favour the corporations operating along the St. Clair River. He has not indicated whether or not he has incentives in mind for those same corporations, incentives which would encourage them to introduce along the St. Clair River the necessary works that will permit the companies to clean up their acts at an accelerated pace.

Everyone knows that there are some companies along the St. Clair River which, in their daily operations, do discharge into the St. Clair River without sewer separation. This is a situation that must be remedied. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the instruments the Government of Canada has in the Income Tax Act to accelerate the initiatives of companies toward cleaning up their daily operations now. If the facilities that exist in the Income Tax Act are not adequate for this purpose, perhaps the Minister could indicate which incentives he would like to adopt in order for the companies to separate the sewage, treat the discharges so that they will not be released into the river until they are safe and ensure that the

monitoring equipment is up to date and not just mechanical as is the case with some of these corporations.

As the Minister said, the report is incomplete and I agree with that. It is a report that is based on temporary information. It does not really go to the cause of the problem. It simply deals with an assessment of the situation and its manifestations about which we know already. We have here a dangerous situation. Dow Chemical alone experienced some 11 spills between January and August of this year. Evidently, it is a company that has had certain difficulties and certain operating shortcomings that must be addressed.

The Minister has not addressed the shortcomings in the day-to-day operations of the companies that are causing the problem, willingly or unwillingly. In true Tory fashion, he has dealt with the symptoms and not with the root of the problem. That is what is distressing about his statement. He has simply told us to accept the fact that we have a chemical society and that we are now examining this particular river. He said in beautiful words that he was unequivocally committed to a new era but how are we going to arrive at a new era? That is what we want to know. I would have hoped that the Minister would have shown some leadership in coming to the House today before Christmas to indicate to us the road that he intends to travel beyond expressions of good intentions. That is not good enough.

We would like to express our dismay with the handling of this matter so far and also with another matter. At this time, two months have gone by since the Americans have submitted to the Government of Canada a plan regarding another river but one which is linked with this one because of our international obligations. The plan involves how to deal with the leaching along the Niagara River, a plan to which the Minister has not yet responded. The Government has not said a word about it. Therefore, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier):

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

Mr. Speaker: Call in the Members.

The House divided on the motion (Mr. Caccia), which was negated on the following division: