

Private Members' Business

ments regarding inspections and shipments of hazardous waste.

We owe it to ourselves and we owe it to future generations. I have heard the argument that provinces have the responsibilities to regulate handling and disposable hazardous waste, but it is the federal government's responsibility to regulate international trade of the wastes.

The transboundary movement of hazardous wastes across Canada and across the Canadian border is governed by three pieces of federal legislation: the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Hazardous Products Act and the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act.

It is ludicrous to pass the buck to provinces, to pass the buck to individuals or companies or to blame the United States. It is ludicrous to say we would like to act but we do not want to upset our international relationships. Frankly, if we pass this motion today, Canadians who have gone to Rio can hold their heads high and be proud of this decision.

It is clearly our duty to act on this issue. No one else can. We owe it to our children, our grandchildren and generations of children yet unborn to take actions like this. I urge the House to adopt this motion calling for the banning of importation of all hazardous waste into this country.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the remaining time of the member for Lambton—Middlesex to speak on this very important motion, a motion which contains 17 words, probably the most important 17 words that this House and this country have heard in a long time.

Prior to this we were debating the referendum and we saw how wordy it was and how complicated. Here in 17 words we can turn the environment of this planet around. If in Rio all countries adopted this policy, we would have the beginning of a turning point on this planet. If implemented, what would it mean? It would mean that every country would be forced to reduce the production of waste, especially hazardous waste.

I will be very interested in what the government members say on this because I cannot see or understand why they would oppose such an important motion contained in these 17 words. I congratulate the member

for Hamilton East for being so creative, coming out with such a simple motion and yet so important.

I wanted to speak to this motion because of my experience recently, a little over a month ago, on the external affairs visit to Russian and Ukraine. What did Russia do? It exported their nuclear waste to the Arctic. We have been reading about all the nuclear waste that is being stored up in the Arctic. From that spot the entire northern hemisphere can be affected. If the former Soviet Union had a policy that it would have to look after its own waste, that waste would not be in the Arctic today.

I cannot stress the importance of these 17 words. This is the kind of policy that we should not even have to debate over an hour. At the end of a one-hour debate we should all pass it unanimously and get on with building this country, get on with saving the environment on this planet.

I add my congratulations to the member for Hamilton East for bringing in these important 17 words.

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to make some comments on the motion before us today. The motion speaks to the issue of banning outright the importation of all hazardous waste into Canada. The main concern of this motion appears to be with the hazardous waste imported into Canada. However, it is not clear whether the proposed importation ban would be imposed on all hazardous waste arriving in Canada from world-wide sources or only those hazardous wastes coming from the United States.

In any event, it is important to point out that the movement of hazardous waste between Canada and the United States has been controlled since 1986 through a bilateral agreement known as the Canada-U.S.A. agreement on the transboundary movement of hazardous waste.

This agreement sets out the conditions for the export and import of hazardous waste between the two countries. The proposed complete ban on imports of all hazardous waste would be contrary to the Canada-U.S.A. agreement and would also remove the only viable waste management option available to many Canadian and U.S. companies.

Internationally, Canada is a signatory to the Basel convention which would limit the trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste to only those countries with which Canada has an agreement. This convention was