

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACCIDENT INVOLVING TRUCK CARRYING SODIUM CYANIDE AT
YARMOUTH, N.S.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment and involves a very serious situation in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, where a truck carrying deadly sodium cyanide has left a road and the RCMP have had to evacuate the residents within a three-mile radius. I understand that officials from Environment Canada are at the scene. Can the Minister inform the House what is taking place there and perhaps of the causes of this particular incident?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, briefly, the accident, which is severe, occurred at 9.30 this morning Nova Scotia time. My Department pressed its top emergency officers into action on the scene. The Nova Scotia Government is the lead Government in this respect, but my own Department is the only one with the equipment and special facilities required to cope with the situation. The Member is correct that evacuations have occurred.

I have just now received the most recent report, having been monitoring the situation all morning. Briefly, the RCMP are on the scene. They have initiated an evacuation of all those residents living within a two-kilometre radius, which radius has been extended to five kilometres in the northern direction to include the village of Wellington. Two schools, two senior citizens' dwellings, and some 2,000 people have been affected. The situation is very much under control. I congratulate the Hon. Member for being on top of it and for his concern.

CAUSE OF ACCIDENT

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I, too, thank the Minister for his frankness. Due to the seriousness of the situation, would the Minister consult with his colleagues, the Ministers of Transport and National Health and Welfare, and perhaps tomorrow under Statements by Ministers he could give a comprehensive statement with regard to the causes of this particular accident as well as the possible liability of the transfer company.

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will consider that suggestion very carefully. In the meantime I can tell him that the cause, to the extent that one can explain it with the little information that is available today, is that apparently an ordinary driver, driving a car on the relevant highway, stopped to look at a deer on the highway and backed up into a truck carrying drums containing the offending cyanide. A collision occurred and the truck left the highway. The cyanide is leaking and because of weather conditions it has become damp, compounding the situation.

Petitions

YOUTH

GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATIONS

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Youth. In my conversations with young people across the country I have found a great deal of evidence that they are concerned that parliamentarians hear their viewpoints on all the issues. They are very much concerned, too, that the Government seems not to be listening to them. The Minister of State has been holding fora across the land. When are we going to see the recommendations that she is going to present to the Government as a result of her consultations in these youth fora?

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague for the question. I have seen that he has met all of 14 young people in Victoria early this week or last week. This very weekend we will be holding our fifth regional forum in Ontario where there will be over 100 young people. Again, it will not only identify the problems that are of concern to them but they will work with us toward solutions.

● (1500)

There will be an important report after the end of the fifth forum and in preparation for a national forum which will be held in 1986.

Mr. Speaker: A very short supplementary question.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, it was not just Victoria. It was Nanaimo, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and a good deal more than 14. Will the Minister of State indicate to the House whether in fact she has made strong representations, as the young people of the country expect, with respect to their concern about the effects on university funding as a result of the transfer payment cuts recommended by the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I specifically asked that the Member ask a short supplementary because we have run out of time. I am sorry.

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CLERK OF PETITION'S REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions, with the exception of four, presented by Hon. Members on Wednesday, October 23, 1985, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

Certain petitions presented by the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan (Mr. Angus), the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Keeper), the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) and the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) do not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.