

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Cassidy: Why did the Government allow that kind of message to be spread across the world when the alternative would have been to allow those demonstrators to continue their efforts to bring peace into the world and to bring the issue to the attention of Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I suggest the Hon. Member is not altogether honest in his questioning, for he knows perfectly well that the two governments had accepted for the past two years the presence of the so-called official representatives of the international movement for disarmament. For the past three weeks, the Hon. Member and I have been aware that the peace camp people on the Hill have no connection whatever with this movement which we hold in high esteem. I have taken the initiative to personally ask these people to leave, because we have understood the message the Hon. Member would like to deliver to the House today. Under these circumstances, I think that the vast majority of Canadians who are in favour of disarmament and peace no longer need this peace camp on Parliament Hill.

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT OPTION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister obviously does not understand that the peace movement is a coalition. The disarmament coalition in Ottawa is meeting tonight to talk about what action its members will take to support their friends in the Peace Camp. They are certainly not disowning the demonstrators who have been on Parliament Hill.

Is the Minister not aware that there was a choice? He could have kicked out the peace campers, which is what he has done, or taken action to ban Cruise missile testing in Canada and to withdraw Canada from participation in star wars research in the United States. Why did the Minister not take the courageous solution of stopping Canada's participation in star wars rather than the route of kicking the peace campers off the Hill?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I must say that the agreements which Canada might sign with the United States are outside my jurisdiction. I simply want to say that we have been most courteous with these people who do not represent the national movement. Under these circumstances, I can assure the hon. member that we will always accept orderly demonstrations on Parliament Hill and that we will always respect the right way of doing things.

As for camping, Mr. Speaker, I want the whole of Canada to know that Parliament Hill is not a camping ground.

[*English*]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED TOXICOLOGY CENTRE AT UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Don Ravis (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment and relates to recent concerns over the spill of PCBs on the Trans-Canada Highway and the fact that apparently not enough is known regarding the effect of this toxic substance.

A constituent of mine called me today and advised that 10 gallons of PCBs were spilled just days ago in Saskatoon. This suggests that there is quite a bit of this toxic substance in Canada.

In light of the need to increase toxicological research, and in light of the fact that the University of Saskatchewan has a partial financial commitment to build a toxicology centre to serve western Canada, would the Minister play a major role in expediting a commitment to secure funding for this project and possibly enter into discussions with other federal Ministers as well as the private sector?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I am quite aware of the excellent work done at the University of Saskatchewan under the direction of Dr. Bruno Scheiffer. Any proposal concerning private sector participation in our toxicology research will be carefully and gratefully considered.

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[*English*]

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

AWARDING OF CONTRACT—ROLE OF DOUGLAS ROBSON

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I regret the refusal today of the Minister of Finance to answer many of the questions put to him. Everyone in the House knows that the Minister of Supply and Services is only a purchasing agent in this matter. We know that the Department of Finance determines its advertising needs and instructs the Minister when to make a purchase on its behalf.

I will ask the Minister of Finance again whether Mr. Robson was part of any initiative in his Department for determining the requirements of his Department with respect to advertising needs. More particularly, was he part of the determination for the particular contract that was let one month after Mr. Robson left his office without pay, presumably gratis of Lawson Murray which paid his salary while he worked in that office? Was he part of determining the requirement for that advertising contract?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is quite wrong in his premise. The Department of Finance deals with the over-all need for advertising.