

Oral Questions

practice that used to apply in this House, and I believe still should, reflecting the principle of presumption of innocence until proven guilty" The Leader of the Opposition stated, "He must realize the reflection that announcements of investigations may have on private reputations . . ."

Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member should take to heart the advice of his own Leader. The Hon. Member does the House of Commons and its reputation no good by getting into the gutter.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Cannot rise above it.

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HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**PRESENCE OF DIOXIN IN PAPER PRODUCTS**

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It concerns leaked documents from the American Paper Institute on the presence of dioxin in ordinary paper products. Since dioxin is an extremely hazardous substance and the processes of production of paper are the same in Canada, I wonder if the Minister would tell the House what inquiries he is undertaking to make sure that Canadian consumers are not exposed to this very hazardous substance in their ordinary paper products?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, my Department does not have that responsibility. Under the Hazardous Products Act we have the responsibility of making sure that hazardous products are identified, but not identifying what is or is not hazardous. That would fall under the Department of Health and Welfare. I will communicate the representation of the Hon. Member to the Minister.

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Dioxin is a substance that affects waterways and fish, and all types of things that are dealt with in other Departments. Ordinary paper products such as toilet paper, disposable diapers, and writing paper are commonly used products. I do think his Department has some responsibility.

Will the Minister undertake to ensure that consumers, in purchasing these ordinary products, are not exposed to dioxin, a substance to which we have no reason to believe there is any safe exposure? This is something for which his Department ought to be taking responsibility.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I share the Hon. Member's concern about this hazardous material, and the fact that Canadians may be exposed to it through various paper products.

I have to inform the Hon. Member that under the Hazardous Products Act, as passed by Parliament, it is not legally my responsibility. It is the responsibility of the Minister of Health and Welfare.

Perhaps the NDP do not feel that the legal niceties need be obeyed as long as they have pronounced on it.

Ms. Mitchell: Are you not an advocate for consumers?

Ms. McDonald: These are consumer products.

Mr. Andre: I will make the representations to the Minister. I will send the Hon. Member a copy of the Act, and perhaps over the weekend she can read it and acquaint herself with Canadian law.

Ms. Mitchell: Where is your role as an advocate?

Mr. Young: Where is your Minister of Health?

An Hon. Member: Who is speaking for the consumer?

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THE CONSTITUTION**MEECH LAKE ACCORD—ENTRENCHMENT OF
MULTICULTURALISM**

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Justice. It concerns the Meech Lake Accord.

This week the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, the national umbrella organization representing multicultural associations across the country, had the following to say about the Accord. "Our worst suspicions about the process of the hearings were confirmed as the report merely rubberstamped the Accord . . . while we were taken for a ride . . . we cannot sit back and watch multiculturalism being set back for years".

Since multiculturalism, like bilingualism, must be recognized throughout the Constitution and not only in the Charter if we are to truly express and support the full nature of Canadian society, why has the Government adamantly refused to entrench multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic in the opening clause of the Accord? In an attempt to treat everyone as first-class citizens, can the Minister tell the House that he is prepared to reconsider the position of the Government?

Mr. Daubney: You obviously have not read the report.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): I was very interested in receiving the report of the Special Joint Committee on the 1987 Constitutional Accord. I thought that the report addressed the question very well that is raised by the Hon. Member.