

Oral Questions

has an overcapacity of some 4,000 megawatts expected to last until the year 2000, will the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources—who is busily engaged now—reconsider his internal departmental review of the whole nuclear question and instead recommend a full public inquiry, so that if Canadians are going to be committed to a radioactive future, at least they will have the opportunity to understand why?

Miss MacDonald: You should have stuck with a good government.

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I remind the hon. member that there are many studies and royal commissions under way in the various provinces. Saskatchewan had one, Ontario also conducted studies as well as British Columbia, and the Canadian government also published a number of documents on this matter. We are in fact doing an internal review of this question and I intend to make public as soon as possible the studies and the documents available to allow the public to react and to give us feedback on the various questions studied within my department. So I can assure the hon. member that the public in general and those concerned will have the opportunity to make their views known to the government and to the public if they so wish, and it is not my intention to keep secret, hidden or confidential the studies prepared in my department.

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● (1430)

[English]

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
REQUEST FOR TABLING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AFFIDAVIT

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the status of women. On Monday the minister told the House that he was prepared to ask the members of the executive committee of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women for a copy of an affidavit to which he had referred and upon which he placed very considerable reliance in the position he has taken in the conflict between him and Doris Anderson. Has he now obtained that affidavit and is he prepared to table it? If not, is it because the affidavit will not bear out the charges he has made?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I have written to the members of the executive committee asking their permission to submit that affidavit. I have not yet received a reply.

Mr. McLean: Madam Speaker, the minister was certain that the executive committee minutes misrepresented the facts, even though he admitted he had not read those minutes. In light of the ongoing discussions, is he now willing to offer an apology to Miss Shelley-Ann Clark, the secretary, for slurring

her professional competence, or is he going to hide under the immunity offered by this House?

Mr. Axworthy: Madam Speaker, I am not hiding behind any immunity. I simply go on the statement I made, which is that the five members who were party to that meeting have signed an affidavit suggesting that the minutes are not accurate. That is all I reported to this House; I made no further comment. I have not read the minutes. I still stand by that statement. If the members of the executive committee are prepared to release that affidavit and make it public, that is entirely their choice and decision to make. I abide by my statement, which is that I have requested them to do so.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

TESTING OF CHEMICAL DEFOLIANT AT CFB GAGETOWN

Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. The minister has indicated that 11 military and two civilian personnel were involved in the use of Agent Orange in the 1966 defoliation operation at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown and that he is prepared to co-operate with the New Brunswick minister of health in dealing with the matter. For further clarity, I would like to ask the minister this. Has the minister initiated measures to identify all persons, military and civilian, who may have been exposed to a health hazard as a result of the use of Agent Orange or any other toxic substance at CFB Gagetown in 1966 or since then? Is he prepared to offer remedial assistance to anyone who establishes that he or she has been injured as a result of such testing?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I can well understand the concern of the hon. member for York-Sunbury, considering that Gagetown is in his riding. He may not be concerned about the spraying action which took place, but rather about the way the question was raised by two NDP members, which needlessly and without reason alarmed the population in that area. I can assure the hon. member for York-Sunbury that at the moment there is no reason to believe there is any health hazard as a result of that spraying. I can further assure the hon. member of full collaboration of myself, the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the New Brunswick health minister. As far as identifying those who may have actually been exposed to this spraying is concerned, we are prepared to contact them to see what happened and have a full inquiry.

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HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

CARRIAGE BY RAIL—POSSIBLE LEGISLATION TO LIMIT
LIABILITY

Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): I thank the minister for his answer. I wish to direct a question to the Minister of