

Oral Questions

tions Act. I will be pleased to report to the House the results of the investigation which my officials will be making under the provisions of the act, with respect to this allegation.

Mr. Lawrence: I do not know what sort of fine point we are entering into here with the minister's language problems, when he says that looking into a problem is not necessarily an investigation of it. My questions to him were: under what legislative authority can there be an investigation? What is it? Who is looking into it? It is as simple as that. What are the terms of reference? What is the problem they are looking into? Who gave them the authority to look into it? What are the terms of reference of it? It is simple enough.

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Madam Speaker, it is clear, I think, that under the provisions of the act the director of my department's corporations branch must ensure that the law is respected. The hon. member is asking what the terms of reference are. The very provisions of the act require that the director make sure that the interests of all those who hold shares in a company are protected and that all shareholders are treated on an equal footing. If privileged information was given to certain shareholders to the detriment of others it is the duty of the director to seek out the truth and I think that is what he is doing in the normal course of his duties.

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[English]

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK OIL SHALES

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The National Energy Program underestimates the potential and possibilities of the New Brunswick oil shales in Albert County. It is reliably estimated that there could be as much as 50 billion barrels in those shales, which is as much as the Hibernia field. Should the government give that potential its proper and due recognition, it could have a tremendous positive effect in Atlantic Canada, particularly with regard to security of energy supply and, of course, job creation for the entire region. My question to the minister is: what is the government's position with reference to this very exciting possibility?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I must say to the hon. member that the government is obviously very interested in the development of all existing Canadian reserves of hydrocarbons, particularly petroleum. The matter to which the hon. member is referring, that is whether there are certain reserves to be developed, is well known to the industry and the government and I can assure him that if it is possible to carry out the

profitable development of those reserves it will be done of course.

[English]

Mr. Corbett: Madam Speaker, the government has offered Saskatchewan a five-year, \$50 million heavy oil research and development program. The Government of New Brunswick has approached the federal government to participate in an R and D program which is substantially more modest than the offer to Saskatchewan. My supplementary question to the minister is: can Atlantic Canada expect a favourable response to its request and the same sort of generous support that the government seems so anxious to give to the west?

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: Yes, Madam Speaker.

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[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

ACID RAIN—EFFECT ON SALMON STOCKS IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Miss Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment. It is now obvious that acid rain from sulphur dioxide and nitric oxide emissions is causing severe damage to Atlantic Canada. It is admitted that acid rain causes fatality to marine life, damage to soils, forests, and damage to structures. We have been told recently by Pat Schnut, chief, chemical hazards, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, that acid rain is causing the loss of 10,000 to 12,000 adult salmon. We have also been advised—

Some hon. Members: Question!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Could the hon. member get to her question, please.

Miss Campbell: We have also been advised that at least seven Atlantic salmon spawning streams are—

Some hon. Members: Question!

Miss Campbell:—so acidic that salmon reproduction no longer occurs. Can the minister tell me what he plans to do to eliminate the effects of acid rain in Atlantic Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, clearly the hon. member is very right to be concerned with this question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, I am glad to see that even members opposite appreciate the seriousness of the situation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!