

delegation, consisting of ten scientists and technical experts from the working levels of the Soviet government and military, arrived for their tour of Suffield on 16 July 1989.<sup>32</sup>

#### PARLIAMENTARY COMMENT

On 24 August 1988, the then Defence Minister Perrin Beatty touched upon the issue of chemical weapons in discussing Canadian participation in peacekeeping operations in the Persian Gulf. Recalling criticism voiced earlier in the summer regarding Canada's research, development and training in chemical and biological defence, Mr. Beatty stated:

That work is strictly defensive in nature and we continue to press for a complete ban world-wide on chemical and biological weapons. But until that day arrives, sending Canadian peacekeepers in an area where chemical agents have been used underscores the need for Canadian Forces to be prepared to work in a chemical warfare environment and, in particular, it underscores the need for our research establishments to develop even more effective devices to protect our personnel....if [w]e did not have adequate training for our Canadian Forces personnel, and if we did not have adequate equipment...we would not have been able to deploy our troops to this region. It would not further the cause of peace to have us unable to send Canadian troops to this region. This is why this work is so important for Canada. I can report to the House that we have issued chemical detection devices, gas masks, and protective clothing to our troops.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout September 1988, questions were raised in the House concerning the issue of chemical weapons testing on human subjects at Suffield during the 1960s. While Defence Minister Beatty maintained that there was no indication that participants in the tests had suffered any lasting effects from them, the issue prompted demands in the House for more detailed information concerning the extent of such testing and the individuals involved.<sup>34</sup>

On 22 September 1988, NDP Member Jim Fulton discussed the case of an individual who had allegedly suffered serious medical problems as a result of his participation in nerve gas tests at Suffield.<sup>35</sup> Calls for a public enquiry into the issue of nerve gas testing soon followed.<sup>36</sup> Responding to the criticism, Mr. Beatty pointed to the Barton study on Canada's research and training in chemical and biological defence as evidence of Government initiative on the issue. Moreover, the Minister gave assurances in the House that the Government would conduct follow-up studies of those individuals identified as having participated in such tests, and that additional efforts were being undertaken to

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32 *Ibid.*

33 *Commons Debates*, 24 August 1988, p. 18803.

34 *Commons Debates*, 21 September 1988, pp. 19478-19479.

35 *Commons Debates*, 22 September 1988, p. 19530.

36 *Ibid.* See also: *Commons Debates*, 23 September 1988, p.19575.