

*Oral Questions***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

CHEMICAL CANISTER CONTRACT

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. In response to my questions earlier this week concerning the testing of chemical and biological warfare weapons in Canada, the Minister stated, first, that this was past history and, second, that those tests were for defensive purposes. If that is so, can the Minister explain why, for example, during the thirteenth Tripartite Conference on Toxicological Warfare which was held in Canada, the three countries agreed, and I quote:

To concentrate on research for incapacitating and new type lethal agents.

If this is history, can the Minister explain to the House why in February, through the Department of Supply and Services, the Army was contracting for \$250,000 worth of chemical canisters to be used for chemical warfare games?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I think I will be repeating what I have said before, that is, that the only chemical warfare, as the Hon. Member calls it, or chemical experience we had was strictly for our defensive and protective requirements. It is strictly for that.

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

Mr. Lamontagne: When I said it was history I was, of course, referring to some of the tests in previous years in the 1950s and 1960s. I still reaffirm that Canada is involved only in defensive testing. We do not stockpile and we do not possess in any way any amount of chemical products which can be used for other than protective and defensive purposes.

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THE ADMINISTRATION

CAPE BRETON COAL AGREEMENT—INQUIRY RESPECTING ACTIONS OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is supplementary to those asked by the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Deputy Prime Minister indicated that he first knew about the Gillespie project in June, 1980. Is he really asking the House to believe that he, a senior Member of the Cabinet, did not have any discussions with the then Minister of Energy, another senior Member of the Cabinet, for a period of some eight months about a major project which came under the jurisdiction of his colleague, or was it that he was asking Mr. Gillespie to act as his conduit with regard to those discussions?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is as is evidenced in the documentation that has been tabled, that this particular project was dealt with at the official level and was carried through by officials of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It was carried

through by a management committee composed of federal officials and provincial officials. We all know that the Premier of Nova Scotia was solidly behind this project. He reconfirmed his support and belief in this project, I understand, in the Legislature this very week.

• (1500)

Because of the merits of the program, because it fitted within the objectives of the Department, it was carried forward at the official level. It was not necessary at any time for me to speak to the Minister in order to urge him to put forward this program. It was not necessary at any time for me to ask the Premier of Nova Scotia if he would put his funds behind the program.

I ask the Hon. Member to believe that, because those are the facts. If they were otherwise they would be revealed in the documentation. Let me tell the Hon. Member that if I had spoken to the Hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, if I had written letters, I would be very pleased to reveal that. There would be no reason why I would conceal a representation which I might have made to the Minister on a project which might occur in the Province of Nova Scotia and might benefit my constituency. If that had happened, I would reveal it quite clearly because I think it would be quite in conformity with my responsibilities as a Member of Parliament.

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PETITION

MR. SKELLY—TELEVISION PROGRAMMING POLICY

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly) on Wednesday, March 2, 1983, has been examined and it has been found that it meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. LEWIS—CAPE BRETON COAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It arises from an answer given by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien), as reported at page 23362 of *Hansard*, when he said: "I have tabled more documents than ever before", as if to offer proof of unheralded openness in the Gillespie affair. In making that statement the Minister led the House to believe that he was breaking new ground.

I would ask you to rule whether there has been a breach of privilege, because included in "more documents than ever before" were 85 duplicates and redrafts of the same set of documents, four copies of one four-page letter, two copies of a 23-page memo and three copies of a ten-page agreement—