

Oral Questions

My office took the material given to it by the member's colleague. According to our practice it was transmitted to the RCMP for such action as it considered appropriate.

It has not been my practice or custom to give direction to the RCMP on matters of investigation. Information was provided to me by the commissioner of the RCMP who reviewed the matter and decided that on the basis of that material there were not grounds for a criminal investigation. That information was put in my letter to the hon. member's colleague.

The whole thing is quite consistent with what I said in my letter. I regret my hon. friend keeps pursuing the matter in spite of the totally inappropriate conduct of his colleague. Instead of pursuing the matter he should get his colleague to apologize.

• (1450)

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has reported the matter was not even brought to its attention. The RCMP did not even receive a file on the matter from the solicitor general and was not even notified of the incident.

How can the solicitor general tell the House he pursued the matter when the RCMP was not notified that it should look into it to see whether it was worthy of an investigation?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP will provide further information about the way it dealt with the matter.

I put on record an accurate quote from my letter of March 28: "The commissioner of the RCMP has informed me that the commercial crime section in Winnipeg has reviewed your", the hon. member for Lisgar—Marquette, "allegations and the RCMP has concluded there is no basis to support an investigation into the Canadian Wheat Board. However, the commissioner has informed me that the RCMP is willing to examine any new information you might have to support these allegations".

I transmitted to the hon. member information provided me by the RCMP and I think if the hon. member and his colleagues had any respect for Parliament they would apologize for the unwarranted accusation.

If they will not apologize and withdraw their unwarranted accusations, everything they say about their respect for Parliament and making it a better place is nothing but a sham.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

There are disturbing reports on airborne pollution in the form of dioxins, furans and hexachlorobenzenes emitted through the incineration of medical waste, sewage sludge and cement kilns burning hazardous waste.

Does the government have plans to regulate carcinogenic emissions from incinerators and are federal guidelines for human exposure to dioxins adequate to protect human health and ecosystems?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 1995 guidelines by Health Canada on the acceptable level of dioxins and furans for human exposure are under review.

We are extremely concerned about activities south of the border which could put the health of Canadians at risk. In Canada we already have an acceptable smog level about 30 per cent lower than the level in the United States, but at the same time the Americans are looking at raising their smog level.

The issue of dioxins and furans is under review here but we also need to examine some transboundary issues to ensure long range pollutants do not in any way affect the health of Canadians currently being put at risk because of decisions being made by the U.S. Congress.

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[Translation]

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

In answer to a question in this House, the Deputy Prime Minister said that this government could not be held responsible for the iniquity of previous governments regarding R&D. Yet, since October 1993 the minister of Natural Resources has granted less than ten per cent of external R&D contracts to firms or research centres of Quebec.

How does the minister explain that Quebec received less than 13 per cent, or half of its fair share, of external R&D contracts from her department since the Liberals took office?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate, as did the Deputy Prime Minister last week when this issue first came up, the government awards contracts on the basis of identified research needs.

• (1455)

Let me reassure the hon. member my department and, I am sure, every other department in the government is committed to research in Quebec. Perhaps I could share with the hon. member some examples.