

Oral Questions

Environment under whose jurisdiction his concerns lie followed up on the details. There were no details.

Mr. Lapierre: What did you do?

Mrs. Martin (Lincoln): There were concerns expressed and those concerns were followed up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ACTIONS TAKEN BY MINISTER

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same Minister. The Minister of State for Transport still has not said what specific action was taken.

Mr. Lapierre: What did she do?

Mr. Rompkey: She refers to some action that was taken, but we were told today that the Minister has just taken action now at border points in reaction to a problem that is becoming very, very serious indeed. What specific action was taken after that conference in Basle, Switzerland?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the action is that after the information was conveyed to my Department, it was also conveyed to the Governments of Ontario and Québec, and to the United States. Then there was an advance operation to check the borders which resulted in charges being laid and samples being taken. It was a very active operation.

I have something to add about Mr. Green's allegations. Mr. Green's allegations are somewhat complicated. In *The Gazette* today, under the signatures of Jennifer Robinson and Marian Scott, we read:

He said he did not mention diesel fuel or gasoline because he was not aware of the extent of the problem.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ALLEGED IRRESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTERS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think we have here a fascinating case of ministerial irresponsibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): We have one Minister who says she heard about it but did nothing. The other Minister says: "My officials did something about it, but I didn't know about it".

My question for the Prime Minister is when will he start appointing Ministers of Transport and the Environment who will start taking some action on crucial questions and who will not simply leave things up to the officials all the time?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): One thing that I will agree on, Mr. Speaker, is that the Hon. Member knows a great deal about irresponsibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Allmand: That is a great answer, Brian.

Mr. Mulroney: I think my hon. friend being a fair-minded parliamentarian—

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): You have had two cases in the last two weeks.

Mr. Mulroney:—will acknowledge that both Ministers have acquitted themselves and their responsibilities in a very admirable way, and I know he would want to be the first to underline and salute that.

INVESTIGATION INTO ACTIONS OF MINISTERS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, as a fair-minded parliamentarian some of the time, would surely want to respond to the fact that his Minister of the Environment said yesterday that he only found out about it yesterday and then took action. His Minister of State for Transport said she knew about it but didn't take any action, even though she is responsible for the transportation of toxic goods. Does the Prime Minister not think that it is time he began his own investigation into the irresponsible actions of his Ministers on something that affects the health and safety of Canadians?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think that all Members of Parliament, irrespective of political parties, are very concerned about the health and welfare of all Canadians. I do not think there is any doubt about that.

In the case at hand, a question has been put to the Minister of State for Transport who responded fully with the information that was required.

Mr. Lapierre: She did nothing.

Mr. Allmand: She left it to the officials.