

Oral Questions

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): No, Mr. Speaker.

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FRASER RIVER

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries. The minister is in receipt of a proposal from his Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Pacific Region, which calls for the development of a long-term water management strategy for the clean-up of the Fraser. The report, which I have with me, stresses co-operation between all levels of government to define limits to human activity and implement strategies to ensure the concept of sustainable development is achieved.

I want to ask the minister whether he will commit his ministry to a co-ordinated clean-up of the Fraser River. Will he acknowledge the need to develop a local management plan on a watershed-by-watershed basis? Will he empower these agencies with the legislative teeth needed to ensure that our environmental legislation is adhered to?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, all I can tell the hon. member is that very seldom do we hear the members of the socialist team congratulate this government on any steps taken to protect our environment. If he cares to look at what is taking place in the province of British Columbia, the hon. member, seeing what we have done in the last five years, should have no doubt whatsoever that we shall do more in the future.

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PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton—Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works in connection with his government's physical responsibility for these buildings on Parliament Hill. While we have been aware of reports of asbestos which may be contaminating the air of the Centre Block, West Block and Wellington Building, apparently more asbestos has been uncovered during recent renovations of the cafeteria area on the upper floors of the Confederation Building.

As one of the many hundreds of worried inhabitants of the Confederation Building, I am wondering if the minister can confirm the presence of asbestos in that

fourth Parliament Hill structure, how serious is the problem and can he advise us how and when his department is going to get it out of there?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, it is true that I am an inhabitant of the Confederation Building. I can tell the House and my colleague that I have had recent conversations with the Speaker on this important issue. There is fibreglass and asbestos in these premises. It is not the same in each building. Most of the substances I think have been removed from the eighth floor of the Confederation Building when that part of the premises was being renovated for different purposes. Work is proceeding in the Wellington Building as well.

I have asked my department to increase the vigilance that it has for inspection and to bring me a more detailed plan for the orderly disposition of this substance which, in its inert form, I am told, does not present a very serious threat to health.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiak): Mr. Speaker, two days ago the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development tabled in this House the government's response to a report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs about the relocation of several Inuit families from northern Quebec to the high Arctic in the 1950s.

The government's response flies in the face of the committee's report. Why has the minister ignored the committee's report which was based on the testimony of Inuit who were part of that relocation experiment?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the government indeed responded to the report of the standing committee on Monday of this week, after having a consultant do an extensive evaluation of the circumstances relating to the voluntary relocation of a number of Inuit families from northern Quebec to the high Arctic in the period of 1953 and shortly thereafter.

The consultant's report says in summary, and I would like to read this briefly, Mr. Speaker:

We found that the decision by the government to actively encourage the relocation of Inuit families to the high Arctic in 1953, and in the two or three years subsequent to that, was not motivated by a concern to strengthen Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Islands at that