

Oral Questions

My department is ready to collaborate in any kind of investigation to see whether this test involves any health hazard in the region of Oromocto, New Brunswick.

INQUIRY WHETHER ADDITIONAL TESTS CONDUCTED

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): My supplementary is also directed to the Minister of National Defence and Acting Minister of Veterans Affairs. Since he knew about the tests last September, according to his statement just now in the House, did he at that time inform the ministry of health? If not, why not?

As a follow-up to my hon. colleague's question, if there were any further tests conducted in this country, would he please disclose what they were? Also, would he please contact the ministry of health so that they may monitor the health of the personnel as well as of people living in the immediate vicinity where the tests might have taken place?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, that series of questions could be placed on the Order Paper, if the hon. member wishes. In the meantime I can assure him that the number of personnel involved in this testing was very small, 11 military and two civilians. The area was the Gagetown base. I heard and read about this spraying over New Brunswick, and I can advise the hon. member that the spray was tested over a small area of Gagetown. Possibly the hon. member does not know that the Gagetown base is 45 miles long north-south and 30 miles wide east-west. A small portion was used for these tests, which does not mean the spray was tested over the whole of New Brunswick.

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[Translation]

RAILWAYS

DELAYS AND DERAILEMENTS IN EASTERN QUEBEC—DATE OF INVESTIGATION

Mr. Rémi Bujold (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport and concerns the decision made by the minister on January 14 to hold an investigation into the problems that plagued VIA Rail and more especially the population of eastern Quebec and eastern Canada during the holidays. Has the minister decided who will undertake this investigation; that is, either the Canadian Transport Commission or the Department of Transport, when it will get under way and how long it will last?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the investigation will be undertaken by the Canadian Transport Commission. I cannot give the hon. member the exact date when this investigation will be launched, but I shall inquire and provide him with the information.

[English]

PETRO-CANADA

CONTINUATION OF EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. It is with regard to energy policy. As the minister knows, the energy policy requires PetroCan to muster all of its resources in an effort to either back in, bully in, nose in or butt in with the activities now going on on federal lands. By so doing, of course, the Crown corporation has no resources left to continue activities in the conventional producing areas of this country. This causes all kinds of disruption in communities and the loss of jobs and technology.

Has the minister reviewed the energy policy in that context? Could direction go to the Crown corporation, asking it at least to continue last year's program in the areas of northeastern British Columbia and Alberta with regard to exploration and development?

Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): As the hon. member knows, Madam Speaker, the National Energy Program does indeed provide a more active role for Petro-Canada in the development of frontier lands. That activity, however, is not such as to preclude continued participation in the search for conventional oil and gas resources on provincial lands. That activity on the part of Petro-Canada will be continuing. That is not to say that in certain parts of the country where wells may not have been discovered the emphasis has not been shifted elsewhere in the normal procedures of the exploration industry. However, participation in provincial lands and conventional sources will continue.

Mr. Oberle: Despite what the parliamentary secretary says, Petro-Canada rigs are crowding the highways, leaving the conventional producing and exploration areas in northeastern British Columbia. There is no PetroCan activity now, even though that is the only area in which they have any presence. It is the only refinery there. Will the government undertake to table before the House or the energy committee a program which Petro-Canada will be committed to in this and the following season in the conventional producing areas in order to restore some semblance of confidence in the energy economy throughout the country?

Mr. MacLaren: In answering a somewhat similar question from the hon. member in committee the other day, the minister stated that he would provide as far as possible the details the hon. member seeks. I shall be glad to see that that is done.