

*Oral Questions***EMERGENCY MEASURES****MISSISSAUGA DISASTER—EMERGENCY MEASURES
UNDERTAKEN BY NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. I do not know who will answer in his absence. The calamitous derailment of the train in Mississauga could have led to many people losing their lives.

Could the minister please advise the House and the thousands of Mississaugans still sleeping in plazas, schools and community centres, why emergency measures and Department of National Defence facilities were not mobilized to expedite the evacuation of residents of this area?

Some hon. Members: Oh!

An hon. Member: One of the smoothest evacuations ever.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Acting Minister of National Defence and Veterans Affairs): I should like to tell the hon. member that the Department of National Defence has been co-operating throughout this whole weekend to alleviate the difficulties caused to so many thousand individuals.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: They have supplied much in the way of material support—sleeping bags, blankets, and so on. They had gasmasks ready to be used if necessary, and some 250 military personnel have been on standby ready to assist at the request of the government of Ontario. No request for assistance was made of them, and they do not go into this sort of situation on their own. But the supplies which have been requested were made available and were used throughout.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flis: My supplementary is to the Minister of Finance. Will the federal government agree to assist the province of Ontario and the city of Mississauga with the emergency funding which they are sure to request so as to pay for the evacuation of the 250,000 people and, possibly, millions of dollars for ambulance, fire, police and other emergency services resulting from this disastrous mishap?

● (1420)

Hon. Walter Baker (President of the Privy Council and Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman will know, there is a formula for this kind of emergency situation between the government of any province and the Government of Canada, and I am satisfied that upon receipt of the appropriate request, and in the appropriate

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

circumstances having regard to that formula, the government would be very pleased to act.

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TRANSPORT**MISSISSAUGA DISASTER—TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS
PRODUCTS—INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION**

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a question for the Minister of Transport arising from the serious threat to human life and health caused by the CPR wreck in Mississauga. One month ago today I was assured in this House by the Minister of the Environment that a bill concerning the transportation of dangerous goods would be introduced, and I quote, "soon". Not soon enough, it appears.

Is the Minister of Transport aware that on Thursday of last week the chairman of the Canadian Transport Commission indicated to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications that the CTC budget was insufficient? It was not a question of maybe there were not enough rail inspectors; there were not enough inspectors for the proper carrying out of the CTC's responsibility for rail safety in Canada. In the words of the commissioner himself, there are only some 78 rail inspectors, when there should be 178.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member put his question.

Mr. Blaikie: Is the minister aware of that?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the evidence which was presented to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications. As a result of this incident and the inquiry which has been ordered by the CTC, and as I indicated to the hon. member for Stormont-Dundas, I have asked the CTC to pay particular attention to the adequacy of safety standards, the level of safety standards, the adequacy of maintenance standards and frequency of maintenance, as well as the adequacy in the number of inspectors to carry out this job. That is certainly part and parcel of this inquiry. We will await the outcome of the inquiry and the government will act on the basis of the forthcoming recommendations.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, hopefully the minister will indicate to the President of the Treasury Board that restraint ought to be lifted in this vital area. My second question is with regard to the fact that restraint with regard to rail safety is not the sole prerogative of government. Is the minister aware of the cutbacks in the area of rail safety initiated by the railroads themselves?

Will the minister tell the House what his department is doing about this in the ordinary course of its responsibilities, and has the minister indicated to the railroads the unacceptability of these cutbacks which have taken place, for instance, in the area of track and car inspection and maintenance?