

Oral Questions

whatsoever whether she wants to apply for a new position with the CBC French network. The hon. member may not know this but I can tell him that the CBC now has a well-established practice whereby people who have been active in politics are not allowed to play host on public affairs programs for a period of about three years.

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[English]

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**TESTING OF CHEMICAL DEFOLIANT AT CFB GAGETOWN—
RELEASE OF REPORT BY GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. On January 26 the minister told this House that the reports of the incident in 1966 at CFB Gagetown were available to everyone, but in a conversation with the minister's office last week I was told that the document I received from the United States government, because of freedom of information in the United States, could not be released by the Canadian government. I wonder if the minister could square his earlier statement that this report is not secret with the more recent admission that, in fact, the report cannot be released by his government.

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, with respect to this question it is normal for me to state again that governmental documents which come from other countries are subject to authorization by those countries to release their own documents. At the same time we would not like the United States to release some of our documents when we have an agreement with that country with respect to such documents. I think it is just normal that the United States has the right to make its own documents available. As far as I am concerned its documents belong to it and not to Canada.

Mr. Sargeant: Madam Speaker, I do not find that a very satisfactory answer, for obvious reasons.

The minister has gone to great lengths to deny that this test was related to the development of chemical warfare agents destined for Vietnam, but in a Canadian document entitled "Vegetation Control at CFB Gagetown" it is stated, and I quote:

U.S. interest is understandable. A great amount of effort has been expended to find some means of destroying the jungle canopy of Southeast Asia.

Will the minister now admit that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, National Defence officials knew in 1966 that they were assisting in testing, the results of which would be put to direct use in the U.S. effort in Vietnam?

● (1450)

[Translation]

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, it is very easy to impute motives in discussing problems such as this one. I want to

assure my hon. colleague opposite, as energetically as I possibly can, that as far as we were concerned that experiment was in no way related to the Vietnam war. I feel that since this matter was brought up, Madam Speaker, it has been established that we had overgrowth problems; we have documented proof that the problem existed already in 1964, that studies were made later on, in 1968 and 1969, and that some of those problems still remain at Gagetown. Therefore, linking this experience with the war in Vietnam is absolutely wrong.

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[English]

ENERGY**STATEMENTS BY MINISTER RESPECTING AGREEMENT WITH
ALBERTA**

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. On a recent tour of northeastern Alberta, including Bonnyville, Cold Lake and Grand Centre, the minister made the following statement: "There will be a resolution of the constitutional and energy problems within months".

Then later, speaking to people in Grand Centre, the minister said, and I quote: "Those who have put their hearts and their money into these projects won't be disappointed much longer".

Will the minister report to the House what development regarding an energy agreement with Alberta has taken place to allow the minister to make these optimistic statements or, indeed, does he have any reason to make these optimistic statements and, if so, how many months does he think it will take before an energy agreement will be reached?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I hope very few months indeed, but obviously this is not dependent only on the federal government. I can report to the hon. member that there have already been two meetings at the deputy ministerial level, and there have been further meetings at the level of other officials. I have indicated to the government of Alberta that we are ready to meet at the ministerial level when it is ready and as soon as it is willing. I am still waiting for an answer in that respect.

Mr. Paproski: Humble Lalonde.

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, is the minister's statement then to be taken in northeastern Alberta as being less than candid, like statements of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, on the contrary, that statement is totally candid. The only limitation to an agreement is the willingness or unwillingness of the government of Alberta to come seriously to the table. If it did that, we could reach an agreement soon.