

They did not spray humans, they sprayed vegetation. This is still being done in forestry areas for other purposes in the province of New Brunswick.

With regard to the hon. member's comment that U.S. authorities have said this chemical is dangerous and condemn it, I would like him to tell me why the issue is not being settled between veterans in the United States and the U.S. government, which did not admit to any damage being done by such products.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the minister has sat on a report he has had on this subject since last September. The report indicated very clearly that experts in the United States have clearly argued that these substances are profoundly dangerous to human health. He has admitted in the last couple of days that this is apparently a routine procedure.

Mr. Lamontagne: Was.

Mr. Broadbent: He says was, in the past. Apparently they have changed it. Perhaps there is some consciousness that there are dangerous implications. Considering that the matter in the United States has not been settled and is now before the courts, with a considerable amount of medical information on the side of those who are fighting the case, why does the minister not establish an independent inquiry in Canada which will make available to the Canadian public, particularly those who might have been affected, all the health implications of these tests?

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, I stated very clearly yesterday, and I repeat it for the hon. member for Oshawa, that if he is concerned about a health hazard as a result of these incidents, I am ready to co-operate fully with the New Brunswick health department and our federal health department and to investigate the whole issue as much as the hon. member wants.

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THE CONSTITUTION

PROPOSED RESOLUTION—COMMITMENT RESPECTING PROPERTY RIGHTS

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and the government knew there were some objections to an amendment on property rights well before the commitment was made in committee. The Prime Minister and the government knew full well that the Conservative party was not supporting many aspects of this resolution. The Prime Minister said today that the commitment was made in order to broaden consensus. Knowing that it would not broaden consensus, why did the Solicitor General, the acting justice minister, make that commitment? Is the Prime Minister really trying to make us believe that it was put forward to broaden consensus which the Prime Minister knew perfectly well did not exist?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the federal Conservative party seems to attach such importance to this matter—

An hon. Member: You're damned right we do.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member says, "You're damned right we do". I say that if they want that amendment so badly in the constitution, and they want it so badly that it should bind all the provinces as well as the federal government, then let them come and support us and maybe I will give up the support of the NDP.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fraser: Madam Speaker, I remind the Prime Minister that the Conservative proposal is to put these provisions that we have been suggesting and working on to the provinces. I come back to what my question to the Prime Minister really was; he has not answered it. He now says he was trying to broaden the approach. Knowing there was no consensus, why did the Prime Minister permit the Solicitor General to go ahead and make a commitment which was not made on the basis of getting support from us for anything, broadening consensus or anything else, but was clearly made as a consequence of some decision in government? The Prime Minister cannot have it both ways. He cannot be saying it was to broaden consensus when he knew it would not broaden consensus.

Mr. Trudeau: Let me make it clear, Madam Speaker. I thought I said earlier that this government supported the property rights clause. We presented it to the provinces last summer. I personally would have liked to see it in the constitution. It was opposed by many of the provinces.

An hon. Member: By Ed.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member for Oshawa was not a party to the negotiations last summer. The negotiations last summer were with the provinces, not with the NDP. We still hoped at that time to get support for the people's package. In the people's package was a clause concerning the protection of property rights. There was a last attempt on Thursday and Friday by the Solicitor General, since it was the federal Conservative party that willed so strongly against the will of some Conservative premiers of the provinces to have this in the package.

● (1450)

Mr. Clark: A commitment given under oath.

Mr. Trudeau: There was a disposition to get the Tory party onside. It did not have this effect so we changed our mind. I put it again today; if putting property rights into the constitution will obtain us the support of several of the Tory premiers and of the leader of the Conservative party for the resolution, then I will go back to cabinet and see if we will not change our mind again.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!