

*Privilege—Mr. Fulton*

1984 and I am attaching two clippings from that time. The method of disposal used was considered at the time to be the easiest, safest, and most economical means of getting rid of the mustard gas. It would not now be permitted.

As the letter very clearly indicates, we have been unable to locate anywhere in the Department of National Defence, notwithstanding the efforts which we made, any record of surplus stocks being dumped over 40 years ago into the Pacific. What I indicated to the Hon. Member's researcher was that if he had any evidence whatsoever suggesting that was the case, we would welcome it being brought forward. That continues today.

There was no attempt, nor was there any action which would mislead the Hon. Member. The facts that were stated in the letter were accurate. We had no record. We could locate no record. We have continued to search during that time and can locate no DND record indicating such a thing.

Earlier this week, the *Victoria Times-Colonist* was contacted by an individual who brought to its attention an article which appeared in the *Victoria* paper in 1947, including a picture under the headline: "War gas brought here for dumping at sea". That was the first time—and it was this week, not last week or the previous week—that it was brought to our attention that there was a document on the public record, not in DND's records, which indicated this.

The Hon. Member makes a great point of the fact that Colonel Mialkowski indicated that the dump would appear to have been 100 miles offshore. Why does he say that? He said that because the article in the *Times-Colonist* of *Victoria* on Tuesday, December 16, 1947, states that some 600 tons of mustard gas and other chemical warfare ammunition "will be sunk 100 miles off the British Columbia coast, army headquarters announced here today". Where did the Colonel get his information? He got it from exactly the same source as the Hon. Member apparently got his from, that is, the *Victoria* newspaper of September 16, 1947.

• (1510)

Was there an attempt to mislead the Hon. Member? No, there was not. The Colonel simply referred to what was in the newspaper in 1947. Did Colonel Mialkowski indicate that there had never been any dumping off the West Coast? Not according to the article I have in front of me from the *Victoria Times-Colonist* under the byline of Paul Mooney of the *Canadian Press*. The individual who indicated there probably had been no

dumping of chemicals was Mr. Fred Hassell who worked as a supervisor in the laboratory at the Colwood Naval magazine during the period in question and stayed until 1973.

It was Mr. Hassell who said:

I am absolutely positive there was never anything like that (shells containing chemical agents). We had to handle everything that went through there, and we would have known about something like that.

Colonel Mialkowski did say quite correctly, and I quote this from the *Canadian Press* article:

Mialkowski said the Canadian Forces dumped hundreds of tonnes of high explosive shells at a site 90 to 100 kilometres west of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, in a trench well off the continental shelf.

The site was more than six kilometres deep. That is what the Colonel said. Has the Colonel confessed that we have done this or, to use the words of the Hon. Member, admitted that 40 years ago the Canadian Forces dumped mustard gas? No, what was said by the Colonel in the last 24 hours is that on the basis of the newspaper article there would appear to be reason to believe this might have happened. It was not a confession or admission on his part, but rather that it has been brought to his attention now that newspaper records of the day indicate that mustard gas might have been put in that area.

The Hon. Member also goes on at great length to talk about threats to public safety. Had the Hon. Member consulted navigational charts for the West Coast of Canada, he would know that those dumps are marked on navigational charts precisely to warn people to stay away from them.

The practice of dumping excess war stocks after World War II was quite common around the world, and that includes Canada. It would not be done today, but it was done during that period. Because it was done, navigational charts were clearly marked to indicate where those dumps were precisely to avoid the sort of incident referred to by the Hon. Member. In particular, in the two large dumps that are marked on the map, we are talking about dumps which go to a considerable depth. I think the depth is as great as 8,000 feet. It is unlikely that fishermen would have a line down that low. However, if the Hon. Member has any information with regard to that, we would be glad to get the information from him.

If, Mr. Speaker, you still believe for a minute that the Hon. Member has presented any evidence whatsoever of a prima facie case of privilege, let me simply review the key facts. The Hon. Member alleges that presumably an