

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the concerns raised by the Hon. Member. I have passed those concerns on to Petro-Canada and I will respond to the Hon. Member when the information is available to me.

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HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS

ISOCYANATES

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I would have directed my question to the Acting Prime Minister, given that this is the first time a woman has held that position—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: However, since the Minister of National Health and Welfare is here, I can direct my question to him. Recognizing the problems that developed due to the use of urea formaldehyde without proper consultation and proper understanding of its effects, will the Minister take steps now to ban the use of isocyanates until such time as a proper investigation has been undertaken to determine the effect that the use of those particular products could have on the health of workers and consumers?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the question put forward by the Hon. Member does not lend itself to a simple answer in the House of Commons. I am sure that he has in mind, as well, the tragedy that happened in Bhopal, for example, and other safety measures with regard to these chemicals.

I have asked officials in my Department to re-examine our safety standards and requirements. At the moment, that is as much as I can report.

REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY BAN

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware that isocyanates are widely used in the manufacturing processes here in Canada and that the effects on the individuals who have come into contact with them are irreversible? Recognizing the problems we have had in the past with similar substances, will he not now move at least on a temporary basis to ban their use until such time as the full effect can be determined and adequate protective measures can be put in place?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the question is really the same as the first question which the Hon. Member asked. Therefore, my answer is also the same. It is easy to ask to ban a given product "until such time..." but obviously there are various factors that must be taken into consideration. It is my responsibility to look at the entire scene rather than simply agree to something that the Member puts forward in the manner he did.

Oral Questions

THE ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. It concerns the 160 political appointments that were made over the last three weeks, including an ambassador in waiting to Washington. The Prime Minister is quoted as saying, referring to patronage: "We are going to reform this instrument of our national life". He also promised, during the election campaign, a parliamentary committee to review political appointments. Which one of the 160 political appointments over the last three weeks will be reviewed by a parliamentary committee, if any?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the appointments that have been made by the Prime Minister and this Government include a great number of very fine Canadians, who, indeed, merit the appointments that they receive. I can certainly give the Hon. Member many examples of that.

I would also point out to the Hon. Member, as I am sure he knows, that the whole question of parliamentary reform and the reform of this Chamber is being examined under the very good supervision and direction of our colleague, the Hon. Member for St. John's East. One of the issues that he will be dealing with is that very important issue that the Hon. Member raises. I hope he will provide his input and lend his support to the work that is being done by the Hon. Member for St. John's East.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

This is a promise made by the Progressive Conservative Party, and I do not see why I should pay to help them keep their promises.

On July 16, during the last election campaign, the Prime Minister said, and I quote:

I was speaking to some Conservatives at the time, and that was what they wanted to hear. When speaking to Canadians during an election campaign—

Mr. Speaker: I am very sorry, but the Hon. Member knows perfectly well a preamble is not allowed on a supplementary. I would therefore ask him to keep to the supplementary question.

Mr. Boudria: Does the Acting Prime Minister agree that this statement reflects the present policy of the Conservative Government, more so than other statements made during the election campaign?

[English]

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the latest figures I have regarding the support for political parties in this country show that the