

*Oral Questions***NATIONAL REVENUE**

DEPARTMENT'S DEFINITION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. David Daubney (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. I met recently with members of the high-tech community in Ottawa and they expressed their concern that in an information bulletin recently issued by his Department the phrase "research and development" has been so narrowly defined that it could exclude legitimate research and development efforts from the tax credit provisions of the Act. Such disallowance could result in the loss of thousands of high-quality jobs.

Could the Minister indicate whether or not he or his officials have met with members of the high-tech community and, if so, whether they will continue to meet with them with a view to arriving at a fair, mutually advantageous, and workable definition of research and development?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question because it permits me to point out to the House that indeed that is exactly what has been occurring. I met with my colleague, the Minister of Science and Technology, this morning, and I want to reassure the House that the guidelines, which were formulated after intensive consultation, are not meant to be interpreted in a rigid or dogmatic fashion. They are meant, rather, to facilitate the eligibility for proper deduction for research and development purposes and they will not be interpreted in such a way as to be an obstacle to the scientific community or the research and development done in this country.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SRI LANKAN HIGH COMMISSIONER

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I am happy to hear that he has promised in the House today to meet specifically with each individual Tamil who has tabled an allegation. Can he explain to the House why, when this information was brought to the attention of his officials more than two weeks ago, there was absolutely no follow-up at that time?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Hon. Member would not want to let her misstatement stand. I did not quite give the undertaking which she just attributed to me. If it becomes useful for me to meet personally with the six individuals concerned, naturally I will do that.

The Hon. Member knows that she is dealing here, in the question of *agrément*, with a very complex and delicate question of international practice. Other Members of the House have raised questions about this situation before. I have

suggested to them, as I have suggested to her, that if they would like to be fully informed about the matter, I am quite prepared to arrange briefings for them and for her.

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has suggested nothing of the kind to me. In fact, he has failed to answer two letters which I have written to him on this particular issue.

Given the fact that the Southeast Asia desk has already recommended against the arrival of Weeratunga in Canada, does he not think that it is at the very least necessary to clear the air and have this matter referred to an independent investigation by the human rights branch of the Department of External Affairs?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it may be that my letter of response to the Hon. Member has not yet reached her office or has not yet reached her eyes. If she says that is the case, I will accept that.

I remain of the view that it would be useful for the Hon. Member to be informed of all the circumstances before she raises this question and pursues it in the House or recommends a course of action that may prove very destructive, not only to Canada but also to international practices respecting *agrément*.

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PATENTSAMENDMENT OF LEGISLATION GOVERNING DRUG
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Over the weekend the Deputy Prime Minister indicated that the Government was reconsidering its proposed amendments to the Patent Act insofar as generic drugs were concerned. Will the Deputy Prime Minister advise the House that the Government has listened to the thousands of Canadians who signed petitions over the summer months and that it does not now intend to proceed with those amendments?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on the television program *Question Period* the Deputy Prime Minister stated: "The Bill is still being refined". That remains the position.

REQUEST THAT AMENDING LEGISLATION NOT PROCEED

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. The Government has admitted that those amendments are in conjunction with the proposed discussions on a free trade deal with the United