

Oral Questions

revenues, improve the economic situation of the Post Office and finally provide all the services to all those who are entitled to them and have a right to demand them.

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INDUSTRY**HEAVY WATER—INQUIRY WHETHER MINISTER HAS HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH QUEBEC COUNTERPART**

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In light of the decision made by the cabinet members of the province of Quebec last November concerning a two and a half year moratorium on the nuclear industry program in Quebec, and given the fact that the government of Quebec categorically refuses to sign any contracts involving the heavy water industry, could the minister tell the House if he has met his Quebec counterpart recently to talk about this question?

● (1432)

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I received word this morning that the government of Quebec and Hydro Quebec had signed contracts with AECL with respect to a very substantial purchase of heavy water to be used in the province of Quebec. That word has just come through to me. I expect the closing of this very significant transaction will take place early next week.

[Translation]

Mr. Allard: Mr. Speaker, should the Quebec government not sign all the agreements, would the federal government, which owns Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, be in a position to carry out its threat to close the Gentilly heavy water plant if the Quebec government does not call off its nuclear moratorium?

[English]

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the moratorium to which the hon. member refers. I imagine the government of Quebec will be publishing a white paper in due course as to its particular plans for electrical energy generation, including nuclear, in the years to come. It is quite clear the government of Quebec is interested in nuclear energy. As the hon. member may know, at the present time Gentilly I is under demonstration, Gentilly II is being built, Gentilly III has been committed, and sufficient heavy water has been committed for two further reactors with a 600 megawatt capacity.

[Mr. Blais.]

NATIONAL DEFENCE**NORAD—BRIEFING OF PRIME MINISTER ON SOVIET SATELLITE—INFORMATION PROVIDED DEFENCE MINISTER**

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister visited NORAD headquarters, apparently he was not briefed about the particular dangers associated with the Cosmos satellite. I would like to know why. One might not want to burden a holidaying Prime Minister with the weight of too many technical details.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, yes, I was briefed. Yesterday I told the House that I was briefed on the very large number of man-made objects which were satelliting around the earth. I believe they said they had approximately 4,000 in their sights and on their records which were being monitored all the time. As I said yesterday, some of them have gone out of control in the past and have re-entered the atmosphere. I was shown certain objects indicating what had been done with these re-entries when there had been recovery. I was told there were other satellites which would probably re-enter in the future, some would not re-enter for a very long time and some would probably re-enter the atmosphere within a shorter period of time.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): What goes up must come down.

Mr. Trudeau: Not necessarily, because if it is synchronized with the turning of the earth, it can stay up there forever.

Mr. McKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister seems obsessed with passing on the garbage he received in NORAD. My question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Seeing that the Prime Minister claims he was fully briefed about satellites, with one minor exception that he has not yet answered as to whether he knew that the Cosmos satellite had a nuclear package aboard, can the Minister of National Defence explain why the Prime Minister did not see fit to enlighten him after the profound and detailed briefing that he had? Yesterday the Minister of National Defence indicated that he found out about the nuclear package last Friday.

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of nuclear garbage up there, and certainly a lot of it across the way.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danson: Within the last hour I reviewed all the procedures of consultation and information which have been gone through. I am perfectly satisfied that the Prime Minister, myself and our staffs were kept fully informed at each stage of the operation when anything effectively could be done or it was in our best interests to know. Co-operation has been complete with the Americans.