

the pharmaceutical industry and in many other sectors we have created a lot of jobs in Montreal. I know very well that it is not very interesting for the opposition to say this government works well in Montreal.

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HISTORICAL SITES

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Preston area of Nova Scotia dates as the oldest permanent black settlement in Canada with the East Lake section of that community being the most probable terminal for the black underground railroad. Yet, this very site has now been designated as a regional garbage dump, outraging both black and non-black Nova Scotians.

Will the Prime Minister ask officials from Parks Canada Historical Sites to immediately assess the site and have it recognized and protected as a site of national historical significance?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, as you know, we have a National Historic Sites Board whose responsibility it is to advise the Minister of the Environment and through the Minister of the Environment, Parks Canada, with respect to the designation of all historic sites, regardless of where they may be located in Canada. Certainly, on behalf of the hon. member, I will draw his concern to the attention of the historic sites board.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): My supplementary question is to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, almost more than any other member of the front bench, is fully aware that the establishment of a garbage dump in a black community on a historically significant site will push back race relations in the province of Nova Scotia at least a decade.

What role is the Prime Minister or his ministers prepared to play to ensure that this issue does not further aggravate the already delicate state of race relations in the province of Nova Scotia?

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the site in question is located within very close proximity of the metropolitan authority which has the responsibility

for municipal government in that area. There may well be a possibility that this does indeed fall into their jurisdiction.

In essence, I would repeat the answer I gave just a moment ago, that certainly the federal government through the National Historic Sites Board has a very keen interest in any area of potential national historical significance.

I have spent most of my life as an historian and I am very much aware of that. As I said before, I will ensure that the matter is brought to the attention of the National Historic Sites Board.

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IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): My question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The *Ottawa Citizen* reports today that a former member of the Immigration and Refugee Board claims that "the Immigration and Refugee Board has become a wretched monster that is out of control".

Canada, as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Protection of Refugees, agreed that all persons with a well-founded fear of persecution have a right to protection from forced return to their country. Yet, Canada's over-all acceptance rate for refugee claimants went down from 76 per cent in 1989 to 64 per cent in 1991.

Will the minister, in view of many recent criticisms of the IRB, respond to the request of the Canadian Council for Refugees by appointing an independent, impartial investigation of its treatment of people claiming asylum in Canada?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): No, Mr. Speaker, I will not. I intend rather to make sure that the IRB can continue its good work on behalf of Canadians.

No country in the world has a better record than Canada in protecting genuine refugees. If the hon. member is concerned about the percentage, I remind him that Canada welcomed and gave protection to over 38,000 people last year. No country in the world equals that record. I think that we as Canadians can be proud of that.