

ENERGY

REMOVAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who has accepted the responsibility for, and given priority to, the removal of radioactive thorium from its current storage site in Surrey, British Columbia. In view of the fact that the minister and the AECB have not been successful in establishing that priority, will the minister state a priority target date for the removal of radioactive wastes from Surrey?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): The hon. member knows that the Atomic Energy Control Board has licensed the interim storage of the materials to which he referred, that they have found this to be a safe interim storage and, further, that the responsibility for finding another site which might be licensed under applications to AECB remains with the province of British Columbia. I believe that one or two departments in the government of that province are at present seeking another site for that material.

Mr. Wenman: I regret that the minister appears to be trying to wriggle out of the responsibility he has accepted on his own behalf of the board, but it just points out that the problems are jurisdictional in nature and the difficulty of storage, not only of radioactive waste but also of low-level active wastes and, in fact, toxic wastes which can be found across this nation. In view of that problem, will the minister sponsor an order of reference to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works so that it might study the matter and make recommendations on the disposal of low-level radioactive wastes and toxic chemical wastes, and on the jurisdictional issue?

● (1502)

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, there is no question of wriggling away from any responsibility. I am quite prepared to accept my full responsibilities with respect to this particular question. Unfortunately, at the present time the act does not give me the kind of responsibility which the hon. member asks me to undertake. I think he made a useful suggestion when he talked about the standing committee. Perhaps the standing committee will look at this particular problem. I will discuss that with the House leader to see whether, under that reference or some other reference, this question might be considered by the committee.

Post Office

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REQUEST FOR HOLIDAY ON NOVEMBER 13

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, since Remembrance Day this year falls on a Saturday and that according to what I have been told public servants are to have a holiday on Monday the 13, I would like to ask the President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) whether he has considered the possibility of asking that the House do not sit on that day in order to grant the same holiday to House of Commons employees.

[English]

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I have had informal consultations, and as a result of those consultations I have concluded that the House should sit on the Friday and the Monday, which are the working days before and after the celebration of November 11. I believe it will be possible for all members to travel to their constituencies to participate in commemorative ceremonies. On Friday the House of Commons will pay a tribute to those whose memory we commemorate on the following day.

I believe it was the conclusion of members of the House that it would be more fitting for them to continue their work as prescribed under the Standing Orders, rather than take a day in their constituencies.

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POST OFFICE

REQUEST THAT EMPLOYEES BE ALLOWED TO PAY RESPECTS ON NOVEMBER 11

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. Because of the wide protest from the public and the Royal Canadian Legion respecting the decision of the Post Office Department to operate on November 11 as a normal day—

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Shame!

Mr. Dinsdale:—I wonder whether the Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne) would rescind the order, thereby allowing postal employees to pay their respects to those who gave their lives for the country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I thank very much the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) for asking me that question on a point of order. I had many inquiries concerning this question when I attempted to seek the floor during motions under Standing Order 43.