

Oral Questions

progress report on the discussions being held by Air Canada and his Department with representatives of the Government of Quebec and Quebecair?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say that discussions between our negotiators and provincial spokesmen have been sufficiently realistic to pave the way for negotiations on restructuring Quebecair rather than creating a new company, Quebecair 2.

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[English]

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**THREAT TO JOBS IN PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Economic Development. On November 1 I asked the Minister about a decision made by the foreign owned or American owned Ayerst Company to transfer its pharmaceutical laboratory facilities from Canada to New Jersey, thus threatening about 300 jobs in our country, and which would also mean the loss of about half of Canada's pharmaceutical laboratory facilities. At that time he said he would look into the matter. This morning, seven weeks later, the workers were told that the federal Government would be starting a feasibility study which might run about two or three months.

Can the Minister assure and guarantee the House, either today or tomorrow, before we recess for the Christmas holidays, that those 300 jobs will remain here in Canada and not be transferred to the United States through the manipulations of a foreign-owned company in this country?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Madam Speaker, I believe the situation is somewhat more complicated than described by the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville. However, I will look into the allegations which he raised with respect to representations that were made to the workers this morning. I, in fact, met with some representatives of the laboratory in question, together with another institution in the Province of Quebec which is interested in integrating some of the activities of the laboratory with its own. The matter is also being examined, I understand, by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, and if there have been any developments I will be happy to convey them to the Hon. Member.

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SEARCH AND RESCUE**AVAILABILITY OF CONTINGENCY PLANS**

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence,

concerning which I gave him notice a few minutes ago. Did I understand the Minister correctly, when he was responding to a question from the Hon. Member for St. John's East a few moments ago, to say that there were contingency plans in place whereby the SAR system could meet major marine disasters similar to the sinking of the *Ocean Ranger* oil rig off the coast of Newfoundland last February, which claimed 84 lives? Are contingency plans now in place?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I did not say that they were in place. I said that ICSAR, which is the interdepartmental committee, when asked at the press conference this morning if there was such a plan in existence for major marine disasters, stated that it recognized the need for a plan and that it was already working on it to make sure that it is better than what is now in existence. There is not necessarily a contingency plan in existence, but there are of course some facilities that we can use. For instance, concerning the *Prinzendam*, we used every resource available to try to save the lives there, and we succeeded. However, ICSAR recognizes that this is not enough, and it is indeed working on a plan to improve our capabilities in this regard.

Mr. Nielsen: I am glad to hear that because, as the Minister well knows, that was one of the observations made in the report, that such a contingency plan is absolutely essential.

TIME NEEDED TO FORMULATE CONTINGENCY PLAN

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): In view of the fact that at 1 p.m. Major General Manson confirmed to reporters, at the press conference of which the Minister spoke that, in fact, no such contingency plans existed, and he did not mention anything about consideration currently under way to bring into existence such contingency plans, would the Minister say what time frame we are considering to the point at which such a plan will have been completed to meet the major disasters which will undoubtedly recur in the regions of the East Coast as well as the West Coast?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, in answer to the question of the Hon. Member for Yukon, I must tell him that most of the 58 recommendations of the Cross Report have been accepted by us as being very logical and should be implemented. Many of them have already been implemented during the last six months or so.

Mr. Nielsen: Where is the contingency plan?

Mr. Lamontagne: And we intend to look immediately into the others which have not been implemented.

Mr. Nielsen: When will the contingency plan be ready?

Mr. Lamontagne: Well, the Hon. Member for Yukon knows very well that it is very hard to put a time frame on a recommendation like this, but I can assure him that two members of ICSAR, the chairman and the vice-chairman of ICSAR,