

Oral Questions

Minister not agree that the Government has every reason, and has had for the last several months, to say to the United States that we will not be able to go ahead with the Cruise testing? Why has the Government not done that when the issue has been and is before the courts and, indeed, there is an application for an injunction before the courts today? Why has the Government not said there will be no Cruise testing until the matter has been determined in the courts?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is framing her question as if the Government were seeking a way out of carrying out its obligation to test the Cruise. We are not seeking a way out; we think that is an important contribution that we are undertaking, and to which we have agreed. I do not believe that the Hon. Member has provided me with any substantial reason why we should change course at this particular time.

The Minister of National Defence has already made clear that it is the intention of the Government to continue its co-operation with the United States. As I understand it, the fact that the matter is before the court in a particular way is no justification to suspend arrangements that have already been put in place.

Ms. Jewett: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister even knew about the testing. We only learned about it from Washington.

WOMEN'S CONCERN

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, may I go back to the earlier point I was making about the importance of women in the peace movement and in disarmament. He saw that himself at Stockholm. They were outside the conference hall; only men were inside.

Given the interest and concern of the women of this country in this issue, not only Cruise missile testing but the whole issue, will the Minister give serious consideration to having at least one woman involved in the arms control and disarmament division of his Department, and will he suggest to the Prime Minister that he do the same with his task force? Above all, will the Minister fill the position of ambassador for disarmament which has been vacant for many months, with a prominent woman who is concerned about the issues that that ambassador is supposed to be concerned about, namely, disarmament and peace? Will he put a woman in that position?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the ideas which the Hon. Member has put forward are worth considering. I understand the concerns which women have about the basic question of the nuclear arms race. It is a concern that is deeply felt by women and, I believe, by all persons who are watching what is happening in the world. I am quite favourably disposed toward doing what is possible to reflect the particular point of view of women in the Department where that is possible. The Hon. Member has suggested

that we consider an ambassador for disarmament. I would do that, and if she has any candidates she would like to propose, I would be happy to receive the names from her.

Ms. Jewett: Don't you know any?

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSION TARGETS

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and concerns acid rain and the meeting the Minister is to have tomorrow with provincial ministers.

In 1982 the Minister's predecessor, now the Minister of Employment and Immigration, said that over all we are committed to cutting sulphur dioxide emissions east of the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border 25 per cent by the end of this decade, and that if we have parallel action from the United States we will commit ourselves to a reduction of 50 per cent. May I ask the Minister if he is now prepared to change that official position?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the meeting tomorrow is to examine our over-all policy between provincial and federal Governments. I would not want to negotiate on the floor of the House what the outcome of tomorrow's conference will be. I would therefore ask the Hon. Member to be patient. The purpose of the meeting tomorrow is to re-evaluate our policy, keeping in mind the fact that, even if we were to go all the way by ourselves, we would still be damaged, and considerably so, in some parts of Canada by acid rain emissions coming from south of the border.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister well knows, many Members of the House believe that his reasoning does not help, because we shall have to go to a 50 per cent reduction in any event.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL MEETING

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister if he is prepared to go before his provincial counterparts tomorrow with a strategic plan for a 50 per cent reduction in Canada now, unilaterally, so that that position can be given to the many allies we have on the United States side of the line who are working with us to end the scourge of acid rain?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the meeting is to develop a strategic plan with our provincial counterparts. I think that is the proper approach to follow, rather than announcing it on the floor of the House of Commons. I want to hear the input of my provincial colleagues, and to develop the plan with them.