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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

ORAL QUESTIONS

Nuclear Energy

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the government was so busy leaking budget highlights that it forgot to let Canadians know about serious security issues at Chalk River. In December, there was a spill involving radioactive material at the nuclear facility. Why did the accident happen? What human health and environmental impact assessments were carried out, and why was the public not informed?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of Canadians is always our foremost concern. In fact, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and AECL, the operator, were on the ground working together during the stoppage of the NRU and, as well, they were working together during this incident at Chalk River. I have been informed that Chalk River has had no adverse effects on human health or the environment during this period of time. As I mentioned, CNSC was on site, and the communications were in place between AECL and CNSC. Regardless, I have asked for a written report on the incident and CNSC officials continue to work with AECL in these matters.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve the truth and transparency when it comes to nuclear safety and oversight, but they have a government that interferes with independent regulators

and keeps them in the dark. The leak remains ongoing, with thousands of litres of low-level radioactive water being dumped into the Ottawa River.

What is being done to solve this and why was the public not informed?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, as indicated already, at no time did any of the events that took place at Chalk River have an adverse effect on human health or the environment. The health and safety of Canadians is always our foremost concern.

The reactor at Chalk River continues to operate consistently and meets all safety regulations and security regulations. We continue to work with CNSC to ensure safety requirements at Chalk River labs continue today.