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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

ORAL QUESTIONS

Nuclear Energy

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

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to nuclear safety, public confidence in the government is dwindling day by day. The government did not tell the public about two leaks at the Chalk River facility. We are tired of asking for reports.

Can the minister tell the public, today, why the cause of the radioactive leaks remains unknown?

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

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the issue raised in the media regarding the Chalk River facility. This Conservative government always has the health and safety of Canadians as its priority concern.

Indeed, today, the CNSC, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, has assured me that there is no leak into the Ottawa River, but I still asked for a report from the officials in my department, as well as the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, to get to the bottom of this.

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

Mr. Speaker, if the government is concerned about the health and safety of Canadians, it has a strange way of showing it: keeping the public in the dark about radioactive spills, dodging responsibility and serving up non-answers. Such behaviour only adds to the mistrust of Canadians for the government.

Why do reporters appear to know more about this nuclear safety breach than the department, the minister and, apparently, the Prime Minister?

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

Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to the House before, I was informed there were difficulties at the Chalk River facility on December 6. However, I was not aware of some of the details that have subsequently come to light. That is why we have asked the department officials as well as the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission to get to the bottom of this and to report their results to me. I look forward to that report.