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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

ORAL QUESTIONS

Minister of Natural Resources

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

Mr. Speaker, in 2005, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration resigned because of an assistant's actions. In 1996, Ontario's health minister resigned because of an assistant's actions. The Prime Minister himself signed a guide stipulating that ministers are to be held personally accountable.

How can Canadians trust a Prime Minister whose signature is meaningless?

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

Mr. Speaker, as indicated, this is a serious matter. Corrective action has been taken. More important, the hon. member opposite oftentimes takes the opportunity in the House to ask me about the situation with respect to isotope supply and I think it is really important that we continue to focus on that.

That is why I was pleased to announce earlier that we have been successful globally in increasing the amount of global isotopes available. Australia has agreed to go online faster than it had originally anticipated. We are working very diligently with our U.S. counterparts on coming up with a solution for this real issue.

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

Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives cannot handle secure documents, how can we have any confidence they will handle isotopes properly?

The minister knows she is responsible. That is why she tendered her resignation. So, I have to ask, was it her idea to sacrifice her 26-year-old assistant, or was it the PMO operatives who made her shift the blame, or perhaps the Prime Minister himself?

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

Mr. Speaker, as we have indicated, this is a serious matter and indeed we have gone to great lengths to describe the actions that we have taken.

I would just like to go back to what has been indicated earlier, that both the *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail* indicated it is time to move on and talk about things Canadians truly do care about, not about who did what to whom at what point in time, but rather what is going on with medical isotopes, how we are restructuring the Canadian nuclear industry in order to make more jobs for people, and what this government is actually doing to help Canadians.