



PARLIAMENTARY MONITORING SERVICES

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EXTRACT FROM

HANSARD HOUSE OF LORDS

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Column Reference

453

Blood Products

[LORDS]

Laboratory

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House of Lords

Tuesday, 31st March 1987.

The House met at a quarter-past two of the clock:
The LORD CHANCELLOR on the Woolsack.

Prayers—Read by the Lord Bishop of Liverpool.

Lord Stevens of Ludgate

David Robert Stevens Esquire, having been created Baron Stevens of Ludgate, of Ludgate in the City of London, for life—Was, in his robes, introduced between the Lord Amphil and the Lord McAlpine of Moffat.

Lord Basnett

David Basnett, Esquire, having been created Baron Basnett, of Leatherhead in the County of Surrey, for life—Was, in his robes, introduced between the Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede and the Lord Murray of Epping Forest.

Blood Products Laboratory

2.42 p.m.

John - make sure she is on the list along with the other 'X's

Baroness Masham of Ilton: My Lords, I beg leave to ask the Question standing in my name on the Order Paper.

The Question was as follows:

To ask Her Majesty's Government why there is a delay in developing the national blood products laboratory scheme.

Lord Hesketh: My Lords, in 1981 approval in principle was given for the construction of a new blood products laboratory at Elstree. Construction began in May 1983.

To enable the building to be completed earlier than traditional methods would allow, a "fast track" design system and build contract was adopted. When an innovative unit like the laboratory is built under this method, it is extremely difficult to forecast the completion date accurately at the outset. At that time our working assumption was that the new BPL would be completed at the end of 1985 or early 1986. There is no single identifiable reason for the building taking longer than expected other than the complexity of the design being greater than anticipated. The building will still have been completed two or three years earlier than traditional contracting methods would have allowed.

However, I am now pleased to say that the building will be officially opened at the end of April. After commissioning, limited production will begin later this year. Self-sufficiency will follow.

Baroness Masham of Ilton: My Lords, while I thank the Minister for that very encouraging and helpful reply, may I ask him this question? While Scotland has

been self-sufficient in blood products for many years, is it not strange that although more people give blood in England, England has been rather slow?

Lord Hesketh: My Lords, this is the reason why we embarked on building the blood laboratory in the first place.

Viscount Melville: My Lords, may I ask the Minister from which countries we are importing these products?

Lord Hesketh: My Lords, so far as I am aware, we are importing no blood from foreign countries into this country.

Baroness Gardner of Parkes: My Lords, perhaps I may ask the Minister whether that is true about blood products, in particular gamma globulin, which is of concern to many people going abroad who have to have anti-hepatitis injections.

Lord Hesketh: My Lords, I shall have to write to the noble Baroness on that point.

Baroness Masham of Ilton: My Lords, may I ask the Minister whether he thinks that with the problem of non-A and non-B hepatitis and the AIDS viruses it is now very important that we have our own blood products?

Lord Hesketh: My Lords, one of the main purposes of building the laboratory is to produce the very products to which the noble Baroness refers. In fact it is for the treatment of plasma rather than whole blood that the laboratory is being built.

Lord Harmer-Nicholls: My Lords, my noble friend said the building would be opened in April. Is he saying that it will actually be in business doing its job in April?

Lord Hesketh: My Lords, it is a very complicated plant and, like many complicated pieces of machinery, after the building is opened a period of build-up will take place. We hope that by the end of the year we shall achieve 75 per cent. capacity.

Restart Programme

2.46 p.m.

Lord Sandys: My Lords, I beg leave to ask the Question standing in my name on the Order Paper.

The Question was as follows:

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of those who attend a Restart interview then go into employment.

The Secretary of State for Employment (Lord Young of Graffham): My Lords, we have no means of knowing precisely what percentage of those people who attend a Restart counselling interview go into employment. Some are placed directly following their Restart interview, but others will have found jobs after