

Oral Questions

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member he would know that the Atomic Energy Control Board is responsible for radiation as well as radiation limits.

The agency works very closely with health and welfare in terms of any crossovers relating to health risk. I will be in touch with the president of the AECB later today and ask him for an update on the issue that the member has raised.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's response.

On another item, the U.S. authorities are currently undertaking a wide ranging epidemiological study to investigate the increased incidences of thyroid disease and cancer that may be associated with radioactive Iodine-131 releases coming from Hanford.

Should the American studies indicate that significant levels of radioactive contamination did in fact cross the U.S.-Canada border, is the minister prepared to initiate similar epidemiological studies to investigate possible long-term health effects to the Canadian population?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I will not speculate on the issue that the hon. member raised. My first answer applies also to his second question. If there is scientific evidence, if there is direction from the AECB, we will follow that up.

• (1450)

I think it is very important, and I know that the hon. member did it in good conscience when he asked his question, that in these areas we do not speculate, but we base our information on science. I am sure that is what he is interested in and that is what I am interested in.

* * *

SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Our government showed the way by imposing sanctions against South Africa. The overwhelming yes response to the referendum has opened a window of opportunity for new economic relations between our two great peoples. Will the Prime Minister now seize this opportunity to place

trade officials in South Africa so that business, trade and investment in London—Middlesex, and indeed across Canada, may flourish as partners in the rebirth of this great nation before the window is slammed shut?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for an important question. As the House knows, the government, as an indication of the regard that we have for the importance of the decision taken by President De Klerk, committed \$5 million today to assist black and white South Africans, particularly black South Africans, to participate economically in development in that area, particularly in regard to the democratic process.

Sanctions that we have followed from the very beginning have been followed jointly with other members of the Commonwealth. The Secretary of State for External Affairs presently chairs the Commonwealth Committee on Sanctions. We met earlier today and agreed that the government will, in co-operation with our Commonwealth partners, seek to send a further signal of confidence to underline the tremendous contribution and leadership shown by President De Klerk at this most critical moment in the evolution of the life of South Africa.

We have always worked together with our Commonwealth allies and we would not want to break ranks now. We will be communicating with members of the Commonwealth to urge them to take some actions now which would send a very positive signal to the President of South Africa and to trading partners around the world and would have the effect of achieving some of the objectives requested by my hon. friend from London a few moments ago.

* * *

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. The most recent figures show the number of daily car trips by Canadians to the U.S. is continuing to increase. Committees of mayors, reeves and business people in border towns attribute this tendency to the wide discrepancy in the price of gasoline between Canada and the United States.