

[English]

HEALTH

REPORTED INCREASE IN ATMOSPHERIC NUCLEAR RADIATION

Mr. Andrew Witer (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Reports this morning from West German nuclear emission monitoring stations indicate an unusual increase in atmospheric radiation which could be caused by a nuclear leak in the U.S.S.R.

In light of the tragedy at Chernobyl and fears that another Soviet nuclear disaster could be in the making, will the Minister tell the House what information he has received on these reports and what steps he will take to ensure that Canadians are fully informed of developments as they occur?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Hon. Member's question, I cannot confirm anything at this moment. We are obviously aware of the press stories coming out of western Europe from West German sources and Swedish sources, just to name two. We are checking very intensely at this point to see whether any of these press lines can be confirmed and, if so, what their background is. I want to assure the Hon. Member, the House, and Canadians generally that if any information comes to my attention, I will release it immediately, as the Government of Canada did in the Chernobyl incident.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

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Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent to revert to Motions for the express purpose of moving a motion having to do with the extension of the provisional rules. There have been the usual discussions. With your permission, I would move:

That, notwithstanding any previous orders of the House, all current Permanent and Provisional Standing Orders, as extended by the House on December 18, 1986, be further extended to May 29, 1987; and that all other sessional and special orders relating thereto also be extended to May 29, 1987.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Let us proceed with some order. The Government House Leader asked for unanimous consent to revert to Motions for a specific purpose. That, as far as I know, has not yet been given, however the Government House Leader has read the motion. This is very important to many of us. Let us have orderly procedures.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) have unanimous consent to introduce his motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gauthier: For that purpose only.

Motions

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

EXTENSION OF PROVISIONAL STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, notwithstanding any previous orders of the House all the current permanent and provisional standing orders, as extended by the House on December 18, 1986, be further extended to May 29, 1987; that all other sessional and special orders related thereto also be extended to May 29, 1987.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I think we should debate for a few minutes. I will not abuse the time of the House. The Government House Leader knows that I want to put a question to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure, the Hon. Member for Peace River (Mr. Cooper), which deals with a ruling made by the Chair this morning. This is important to many of us and has great impact on the proceedings of the House.

There is not one Member in the House who is unaware that this morning the Speaker made a ruling that the use of dilatory motions during Routine Proceedings needs to be examined by the House because there are gray areas in the use of those motions. We require some definite and clear undertakings as to what is meant. I had intended to ask the Hon. Member for Peace River, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure, if he would give the House his undertaking that as chairman of the committee he would deal with Mr. Speaker's ruling concerning dilatory motions with a view to looking at the impact, effect and consequences of that ruling on our procedures so that we will all have a clear and distinct knowledge of how the House operates. That is basically my argument, that since we cannot appeal your rulings, Mr. Speaker, we must depend on a set of rules that is clear to all of us.

● (1510)

This is not Britain, this is Canada. We have a Constitution and we have Standing Orders. They are known to all of us and they are used by all of us. However, if the Speaker has discretion to do certain things of which I am not aware, I am put in a difficult position. That is the point I would like to make to the chairman of the Standing Committee. I think it is imperative that he convene the committee, study the ruling made by the Speaker this morning concerning dilatory motions during Routine Proceedings and report to the House what Hon. Members feel should be done about the ruling. I would invite the Hon. Member for Peace River to give me that