

Oral Questions

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, if anything, the House Leader of the NDP knows even less about this subject than his Leader. The fact is that there was a manual published by the Government of Canada with respect to acceptable standards for storage of PCBs. It had nothing whatever to do with the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. It was in place beforehand.

We are simply saying that all the judgments that our scientists have made, as expressed in this manual, with regard to what the experts say should be done when PCBs are stored, ought to be enforced through regulation at the provincial level because it is their jurisdiction. It has been done in most provinces.

I went on to say that in those provinces where such standards are not enforced, we reserve the right, under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, specifically Section 35, to take the necessary action at the federal level.

● (1450)

MINISTER'S ANSWERS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister will know full well that what he is talking about are national guidelines that have no status in law whatsoever. The Minister has had three opportunities to respond to my Leader's questions. He had an opportunity to respond to my direct question regarding the existence of enforceable national standards. I can only say that he is deliberately misleading the House on this issue. Will he not have the courage to stand up and say that he is deliberately misleading the people of Canada on this issue?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member, of course, has every right to indicate in a question or in debate that, for whatever reason, any other Hon. Member through mistake, error or otherwise, may be setting up something that the other Member does not agree is correct. He may say that that is misleading, but the Hon. Member knows he cannot say intentionally misleading. I know he would want to withdraw that part of the question.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your intervention. I must say that I have never used the term "deliberately mislead the House" before. I hope I will never have to use it again. At this point, I cannot withdraw.

Some Hon. Members: Throw him out.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for York—South Weston.

* * *

APARTHEID

OPERATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANIES IN CANADA

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In 1985 his Government announced a series of

measures to demonstrate opposition to apartheid in South Africa, including the termination of Canadian Government procurement of all South African goods and services.

If the Minister and his Government are committed to these measures, will he explain why two South African companies operating in Canada, Boart Canada International and Long Year Canada, have received grants from the federal Government, and that Long Year and another company linked closely to Boart Canada have received \$2 million in government contracts? Does the Minister feel that the Canadian taxpayer should be subsidizing South African companies operating in Canada? How can the Minister purport to be a leader in the fight against apartheid when his Government is taking a business as usual attitude with South African companies operating in Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, at this moment I am not aware of the details of the arrangements that the companies named by the Hon. Member might have with the Government of Canada. I will look into them. If there is any cause for us to act or anything inconsistent with our policy, I will take the appropriate action then.

Mr. Nunziata: I am somewhat surprised that the Minister is not aware of grants made by his own Government.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, in December, 1985, the president of one of the companies receiving grants from the Government of Canada snubbed his nose at the Minister and said the following: "Despite the press and posturing of our politicians—" referring to the Minister "—our business with our South African associated companies is proceeding in normal fashion".

Why is the Minister continuing his posturing? When will he stop his posturing, show some real leadership and sever all economic and diplomatic relations with South Africa?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, perhaps my hon. colleague was not aware of the details for the very good reason that my hon. friend opposite phoned my office to get the information rather than the office of my colleague.

I have the information. I can tell the House that the Department has not provided any financial assistance to Boart Canada Incorporated. At the moment there are some applications from Boart or Long Year before the Department, that any corporate citizen can make. They are under review and, following the request of my hon. friend opposite, I have requested that these particular cases be brought to my immediate attention.