

Oral Questions

not apparently have the courage to come right out and make an accusation with respect thereto. Second, if he had read the conflict of interest guidelines that were tabled in this House last September 9, 1985, he would know that they do not apply to spouses of Members of Parliament, who, we maintain, are not chattels.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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DISASTERS

SOVIET NUCLEAR REACTOR ACCIDENT IN UKRAINE—POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON CANADA

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I have a question to direct to either the Minister of the Environment or the Minister of Health and Welfare, whichever one is speaking for the Government with respect to actions taken by the Canadian Government in relation to the accident in the Ukraine. I wonder if either Minister could bring the House up to date on what special surveillance mechanisms are being put into place by Environment Canada, what has been discovered, and bring the House up to date on the possible effects of this accident on the Canadian atmosphere.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to abuse the time of the House and I will try to be very succinct. I am sure all of us in the House regret the accident that has taken place in the U.S.S.R. I want to say from a Canadian point of view that, as Minister of National Health and Welfare, I have the lead responsibility under the federal Nuclear Emergency Response Plan, in conjunction with other colleagues in the House, regarding incidents such as this.

As of noon today we have activated the emergency response team. Environment Canada is using 28 airports and they are starting to monitor as of noon today. Weather stations which tested weekly have been asked to do so continuously now on a daily basis. As these stations are on our northern frontiers I would possibly be in a position to be able to make a further statement on Thursday.

I intend to keep the House and the public as informed as I can. I can say I believe from a Canadian point of view the best information we have at the moment is that Canadians are not at risk, but obviously we are checking this literally minute by minute.

Mr. Blaikie: I would hope that the Minister might consider making a statement at an appropriate time, either tomorrow or Thursday, to keep the House up to date.

● (1430)

SAFETY STANDARDS FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS—SWEDISH CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Does Canada intend to support the call by Sweden for an international conference on safety standards with respect to nuclear power plants, and will we also be supporting the desire of the Swedish Government that the world have more access to inspection of nuclear power plants within the Soviet Union?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it has been a long-standing position of Canadian Governments that we would want to support initiatives of that kind, and certainly Canada would actively support any initiatives that were born out of these tragic circumstances.

I might take the opportunity to indicate that, on the instructions of the Prime Minister, Canada is today communicating to the Soviet Union our willingness to provide any kind of technical help that may be within our competence and may be useful to the Soviet Union in these circumstances.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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TRADE

IMPOSITION OF U.S. DUTY ON CANADIAN FISH IMPORTS

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the Secretary of State for External Affairs says, this action today by the United States Government represents a serious derailment on the fast track to free trade talks.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker: Does the Minister not believe that this is a clear slap in the face to the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada? Was there not an understanding, if not an agreement, that no new duties would be imposed while these talks were on?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that Members of the House, facing a situation where there is real harm done to Canadian fishermen, would try to put partisan advantage in the House of Commons ahead of the interests of Canadian fishermen.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): We are concerned about the interests of the Canadian fishermen who are affected. That is