

Oral Questions

governments and their purpose is to provide more housing at low cost for low income people and senior citizens.

Mr. Whiteway: Mr. Speaker, the minister is obviously confused. I am not talking about any study but the one authorized in the legislation of 1970. I have here a confidential cabinet report dated July 17, 1973, and I am showing it to the minister. I am talking only about the senior interdepartmental committee on urban affairs. Has that committee met? If so, would the minister table its reports since 1975?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I think we ought to live for the future and not for the past.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ouellet: The hon. member is referring to a document which goes back to 1973. I would like to remind all members of this House, particularly those in the New Democratic Party who are so noisy today, that the production of housing reached record levels in the years 1975, 1976 and 1977. We have one of the best records of production in housing for Canadians, a record that cannot be matched by many countries in the world.

● (1422)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: With a past like this government's, I can understand why the minister is talking about the future.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

RADIATION HAZARDS FOLLOWING CRASH OF SOVIET SATELLITE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Tomorrow, as the minister might know, an important book by Leo Heaps, entitled "Operation Morning Light" will be published. This book deals with the crash of the Soviet satellite, Cosmos 954, in the north of Canada last year.

Considering that Mr. Heaps, in this book, contends that there are certain facts pertaining to potential dangerous health and ecological effects of the radiation produced by this crash which have not been revealed to the public, can the minister tell the House if the study done by the research laboratory of AECL at Pinawa, Manitoba, has been completed; and, if so, why has it not yet been made public?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I will be very pleased to look into this question to find out the status of that study. In the meantime, may I reassure the hon. member and the House that the information and advice I have received from AECB which assisted in the clean-up and identification of radioactiv-

[Mr. Ouellet.]

ity in the north, was that there was no threat to Canadians or to the environment.

Mr. Broadbent: My second question pertains very directly to what the minister has just touched upon in his answer. I hope he will consider his words with great care in answering the question, because it is most serious. Considering that only a small fraction—less than 4 per cent, I am informed—of enriched uranium 235 has so far been accounted for, can the minister assure the House that threats, both to human health and to the ecological system of the north, have been negligible?

Mr. Gillespie: If the hon. member has new information which has not yet been made public, I will want to reserve my position. But I have told him of the advice which I have received, to the effect that there was no threat to the health and safety of Canadians.

Mr. Broadbent: I can tell the minister that the same officials did everything they could to stop the author from getting information which ought to have been made available to the public, and that is well documented in the book.

My final question to the minister is this: considering that the Great Slave Lake was covered with contaminated particles, and considering that the bones and marrow of caribou eaten by the native people are possibly dangerously contaminated, is the government now monitoring, and does it plan to continue to monitor in the future, the possible effects of fissionable by-products on the northern food chain as a whole?

Mr. Gillespie: There have been a number of studies involved in this unfortunate and unhappy event. There was a very substantial clean-up throughout the winter snow period and a further clean-up during the non-snow period, particularly around the communities. So far as I know, that clean-up has been completed.

With respect to ongoing studies and monitoring of the effects, that work might well be undertaken by a number of different agencies and universities. I will want to inform myself on just what research is being done in that area at present.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

INQUIRY WHETHER BUDGETARY CUTS WILL HELP WORKERS LAID OFF BY CADBURY COMPANY

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Could the minister specify whether the money saved through the regular budgetary cuts in the unemployment insurance program will be of some help through retraining or job creation programs, especially to the 500 newly unemployed people from Cadbury?