

Oral Questions

Would the Secretary of State for External Affairs not agree that this effective granting of immunity to South Africa is in fact an encouragement to South Africa to increase the level of violence in southern Africa?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): No, I wouldn't agree with that; but, I think that the latest acts of murder undertaken on behalf of the state and the Government of South Africa, with their incursions into Zambia to kill innocent civilians, should cause any Canadians who have any continuing belief that words alone will cause the South African Government to change its policies to reconsider that view.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): If these actions are supposed to cause Canadians to believe that mere words are not going to change things, what about the words of the Prime Minister a year and a half ago when he said that there would be a complete severing of economic and diplomatic relations with South Africa if there was not an improvement in the situation in that country?

Isn't it about time for this Government to put an end to the words and impose some actions on South Africa?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The Hon. Member has been among those who have acknowledged the role of leadership of this Government, and in particular this Prime Minister, in respect of bringing about a peaceful and profound change in southern Africa. We intend to continue to play that role of leadership.

The exercise of that role will involve the continued application of economic pressure, but it will also involve the seeking of ways in which lines can be kept open with the regime in South Africa so that if there is in fact some peaceful response to the pressures that are brought by Canada and by others, there will be some opportunity for the world to take advantage of it and to try to seek that peaceful way, thus avoiding the chaos that would otherwise come to that subcontinent.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORT

SAFETY ON JACQUES CARTIER BRIDGE—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport and concerns safety on the Jacques Cartier bridge. Mr. Speaker, on the weekend there were seven accidents on the bridge, resulting in one death. Since January 1987, the Minister of Transport has had on his desk a report containing specific recommendations for dealing with the safety problem

on the Jacques Cartier bridge. Unfortunately, this morning the Minister told reporters that the problem was not urgent. My question is the same one being asked by the police at the Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges, and it is this: Will the Minister inform the House how many deaths and serious accidents it will take for him to deal with this problem?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I learned through the Quebec press of Monday that the Hon. Member was going to ask me a question, and I haven't been able to sleep since.

The position on the Jacques Cartier Bridge is as follows. The bridge has been there for many years. It was constructed many years ago. There is no emergency arising out of the bridge having been constructed in any way that was wrong, or whatever.

As a matter of fact, we hired Trafrix Inc., a consulting company, to investigate the cause of these accidents and to make recommendations.

That company submitted a report in February to the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, the authority responsible for the operation of the bridge. As a matter of fact, there was a meeting yesterday between representatives of my office and representatives of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and the Department of Transport.

I am concerned about safety matters on the Jacques Cartier Bridge. If the drivers who use it would drive more slowly, it would certainly be a help.

We intend to take steps to see that these matters are looked into. But, Mr. Speaker, I have had a full report on this matter from the Members of Parliament for La Prairie, Longueuil and Chambly, long before the hon. gentleman ever decided to get some publicity in connection with it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Now we are going to get some action.

[Translation]

PROPOSED MEASURES

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, it is not only disappointing, it is absolutely shameful, and the family of the victim who died on the weekend is unlikely to see anything funny about the Minister's comments. The Minister is right when he says, and in fact he knows, that according to the report, speeding is the reason why there have been so many fatal accidents on the Jacques Cartier bridge. Since we know the cause and the consequences, and since the report recommends a number of solutions, is the Minister prepared, first of all, to authorize the Jacques Cartier Bridge Corporation this afternoon to invest one million dollars in two extra patrol cars to improve police surveillance; and second, to install permanent traffic signals and third, to install anti-skid