

Oral Questions

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it must be Friday to hear such pitiful statements from the opposition.

I said at the committee, where the hon. member had every opportunity to pursue this further, that Mr. Wright had been given a very specific mandate. He was not to negotiate any payments to any lobbyists who were involved in the Pearson deal. He was not to negotiate any arrangements that provided for lost profits. He was to negotiate on the basis of appropriate out of pocket expenses.

With all due respect to the hon. member, this person has been chairman of the Ontario Securities Commission. A person operating in the legal profession in Ontario with the reputation and ability of Mr. Wright regularly charges fees to his personal clients, corporate clients and the Government of Canada at least twice and three times what is being charged to the Government of Canada as he carries out his responsibilities in this matter.

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[Translation]

KANESATAKE

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs.

We have learned that the Department of Human Resources Development is about to provide substantial financial assistance for the establishment of a parapolice patrol force on the Kanésatake reserve.

Given the very serious problems with security on the reserve and the tense relations between Chief Jerry Peltier and a substantial portion of the Mohawk population, many people have expressed serious fears about the addition of—

[English]

The Speaker: Order. It is getting a little bit difficult to hear the questions and answers. I wonder if all hon. members would please give their full attention to Question Period. Would the hon. member please put his question now.

[Translation]

Mr. Caron: Mr. Speaker, many people are concerned about the establishment of this patrol force.

Was the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development briefed on the discussions which took place between the Kanésatake Band Council and the Department of Human Resources Development concerning the establishment of such a patrol force at Kanésatake?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the member's statements are greatly exaggerated.

• (1135)

These Aboriginal project proposals involve establishing a team to operate a 24-hour suicide hot-line.

Teams would also be trained to deal with distress and family violence situations. This initiative is entirely constructive, peaceful and humane. This is not a paramilitary force that is being set up, but rather a team to assist groups and individuals in distress.

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, can the Indian affairs minister tell us what specific guarantees he has obtained from the band council to reassure the residents of Kanésatake, who are afraid to see this patrol force become a police force?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the hon. member is trying to create a situation of fear when there should be none at all.

The project is very simple. Under our department there is the Pathways group. This group of native people from across Canada make decisions on employment projects and give assistance.

As I just said the purpose of this group and the project is not to provide any police service whatsoever. It is to help families who are in distress, who are in fear of suicide, who are in fear of family violence. It is part of the healing process that we must provide for native people across this country. It is exactly the kind of thing that can bring peace and reconciliation in that area which is so very important that we provide.

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NATIONAL REFERENDUM

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I noted with interest reports this week that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs made some comments that the federal government is contemplating holding a referendum on Quebec independence. It is good to see the government acknowledge the value of direct democracy.

Can the minister give us some details of the government's plans? What would be the timing of a national referendum and when would the House expect to hear more details?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is not planning to have a referendum on these questions. It is not planning it for a good reason. The Liberal government in Quebec will win the election and we will have no need for such a referendum.