

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the minister justify penalizing businesses retroactively for an error committed by his own employees?

[English]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the error committed is one fully admitted to. The difference is who the Bloc Quebecois wants to pay for the error.

The vessel owners understood there were fees to be paid. They paid them. There has been an administrative error. It is not unusual to have the Bloc Quebecois try to have the taxpayers of Canada pay for administrative errors easily corrected by legislation.

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GUN CONTROL

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Obviously my Reform colleagues did not understand the importance of the decision and the resolution taken yesterday by the Canadian Police Association in response to its appreciation for the safety to be brought to communities by the legislation.

Would the minister explain to us exactly who the Canadian Police Association represents? Is it not the policemen who work on the streets in our communities from coast to coast?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed.

We have had for several months now on the record a resolution passed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police calling for a variety of measures with respect to firearms already in Bill C-68 and supporting full registration.

Until yesterday the Canadian Police Association, which represents the rank and file police officers, had withheld expressing a position on the bill or on registration until it had a chance through its own firearms committee to canvass the views of working police officers across the country.

Yesterday delegates from across Canada came to Ottawa for the purpose of making up their minds. They debated the issue and issued resolutions in which they support every element of the firearms bill the government has put forward subject to the conditions I have mentioned having to do with budgets and with decriminalization of the first offence.

It is extremely significant that this is a group representing the working rank and file police officers on the streets, the persons we look to for safety in the communities.

Oral Questions

PATRONAGE APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Reformers knew it was only a matter of time before the Prime Minister got back into patronage as usual.

Unlike his colleague, Jean-Robert Gauthier, Mr. Berger will not be given a seat in the Senate but will be made ambassador to Israel. Perrin Beatty, who stands to receive \$5 million from the MP pension plan, has been today appointed to the presidency of the CBC. I am sure he will give up his pension as a condition of that.

My question is for the Acting Prime Minister. Between junkets abroad and patronage appointments, why does the Prime Minister insist on doing business the same way Mulroney did, especially since the Liberals raised such a big stink on these matters when they were on this side of the House?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to Mr. Berger, what was in the press is simply speculation. Unless and until something happens in that regard, there is really nothing to comment on.

With respect to Perrin Beatty, he is an experienced former parliamentarian and minister who held portfolios involving national revenue, foreign affairs and communications. It is felt he has the necessary skills and experience to handle the position of the president of the CBC.

I can confirm his salary will be reduced by the amount of his pension. Therefore he will not be double dipping. Furthermore, since Mr. Beatty sat in the House as a Conservative, it is not a partisan political appointment.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, patronage is patronage.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

• (1145)

Mr. Silye: Patronage is an appointment or a promotion given by a patron to a former patron. Politicians are all part of the same old club. It is plums and rewards like this that Reformers want to put an end to.

I have a supplementary question. With Kim Campbell going off to Moscow when can we expect to hear or when can we get confirmation that Mr. Brian Mulroney will be singing "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" from the Emerald Isle?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the law passed by Parliament gives the responsibility to the government to appoint the president of the CBC. It is a responsibility that has to be carried out in order to ensure that vital national institution operates.