

Oral Questions

My question is directed to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. How can the minister responsible for implementation of the Official Languages Act continue to tolerate the obstruction by Kingston's municipal council concerning the plans for building a real school for francophones in Kingston, when the minister has already approved the expenditure of over half a million dollars for the construction of a cultural centre attached to the school, right on the controversial Olan Mills site?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, this decision reflects the Canadian government's determination to support Kingston's francophones. There will be a school.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Does the minister still claim that Kingston is a showcase for bilingualism in Canada, and will he confirm that, so far, none of the teachers at the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean have agreed to sign a contract for their transfer to Kingston?

[English]

Hon. David Michael Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member is getting her information. We have been having some very fruitful discussions with the commanding officer at CMR who, as I have announced, will be going to Kingston, Brigadier General Emond, Mr. Carriere, who has been the principal at Collège militaire royal, and the members of the faculty about their transfer to Kingston.

I do not get the same sense of disquiet from those officials of our department at the Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean or the professors that the hon. member has.

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NATIONAL HEALTH CARE FORUM

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, Thursday the health minister was asked to give a more formal role to the provinces in the national health care forum. The answer was not likely. Tuesday the Prime Minister said that he was much more flexible.

My question is for the health minister. Can we have today's version?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would like the member to get *Hansard* and read the Prime Minister's answer. It is the same as mine.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, the provinces are the major players in health care. They deserve formal status. Will the minister give up her co-chair to allow the major stakeholders official status?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member, as the Prime Minister stated earlier today, that the forum is not meant to take the place of the federal-provincial conference of ministers of health. The forum is meant to be a dialogue between different people in Canada, individuals, and it is meant to advise the Government of Canada.

I repeat that we must not let intergovernmental squabbles deter us from the real work of the forum which is to enhance and protect the health of all Canadians in the 21st century.

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[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, Amnesty International yesterday condemned the Canadian government's attitude to human rights violations in China. Amnesty says: "Canada's public silence is interpreted by Chinese government officials as recognition that they were justified in crushing the democratic opposition in 1989". Arbitrary detentions and trials are thought to be the norm and cases of mistreatment and torture are regularly reported. In 1993 alone more than 1,400 prisoners were summarily executed.

• (1440)

I ask the Prime Minister if we are to understand that, for the sake of commercial interests, Canada has chosen to close its eyes on the thousands of Chinese still languishing in jail, a few days from the sad fifth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this government's policy has always been clear: we deplore regimes that do not respect people's freedom.

We have told the Chinese government this at every opportunity. However, there is no international boycott of China. All countries in the world do business with China. We believe that the best way to open that society is to open it to the world. After trading extensively with Western countries, the Chinese themselves will recognize that Western values for the protection of human rights are the best. That is the best way to proceed, because if China is completely isolated and cut off, there will be more and more abuse.

We believe that the method used by this government of condemning those people for what they do but continuing to do business with them, as all countries in the world do, and to offer them North American, Canadian or European technology is the best way to bring them to accept western values. Completely isolating them is not the way to do it.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. If, as the Prime Minister says, the government has not given up on human rights will the Prime Minister solemnly undertake to