

Oral Questions

endeavouring to find out, from our embassy, all other relevant facts, in particular the question of whether there is a problem with nuclear radiation. If, as I believe, the motion by the hon. member for Edmonton South, which was approved under Standing Order 43 earlier, requests the government to convey our concern to the Israeli government, we will certainly follow those instructions of the House. Beyond that, we would like to have just a little more information before we take any action.

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Because of the difficulty there is in eliciting information of this nature during the necessarily limited question period, would the Secretary of State for External Affairs undertake to make a statement on motions when more detail becomes available, so that we can have a much clearer picture of the state of affairs in the Middle East at this time?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I will be pleased to give consideration to at least some form of fuller information to the House and the country when further information is available.

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PENITENTIARIES

IMPLEMENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY SUBCOMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. Recommendation No. 1 of the report of the subcommittee on the penitentiary system in Canada states:

A crisis exists in the Canadian penitentiary system. It can be met only by the immediate implementation of large-scale reforms. It is imperative that the Solicitor General act immediately on this report as a matter of the utmost urgency.

Why have the intent and recommendations of the subcommittee not been implemented in their entirety in view of the fact it was presented as a complete package and was submitted by a unanimous decision of the committee, chaired by the member from Windsor-Walkerville, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, it is true that not all of the measures recommended in that joint committee report have been implemented, but that is because former solicitors general, including those of the hon. member's own party, and myself, do not agree with all of the reforms. Those with which we do agree have been implemented. I think documented evidence of that has been presented to the justice committee from time to time, and has been accepted by the justice committee.

So far as there being a crisis in the prisons is concerned, the fact that no demands were made by inmates during any of the incidents which have happened in the last few days is some

evidence that they were not motivated by a lack of reform or by wanted or needed changes in any of the institutions.

REFERRAL OF SUBJECT OF RIOTS TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Recommendation 65 provided for a permanent reference during the rest of the Thirtieth Parliament, and for the Thirty-first Parliament to enable it to review the implementation of the report. As far as I can see, this was not followed. Will the Solicitor General proceed now to provide such a reference in this Parliament, including a study and report with reference to the incidents to which I have previously alluded? It would seem to me that the magnitude of the riots which have taken place would indicate that something more drastic must be done, and some greater reforms will have to be undertaken in order to bring the penitentiary system under control.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I have no present intention of recommending such a reference because I am not satisfied that the incidents which took place in the institutions have indicated any kind of fundamental weakness in the institutions. However, I would be glad to hear from the hon. member as to what sort of issues he feels could be considered by such a reference, before considering whether one should be recommended.

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BANKS AND BANKING

TAXATION LEVELS APPLICABLE TO BANKS

Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview-Greenwood): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. In light of the fact that the profits of the chartered banks have gone up 210 per cent since 1970, and that their taxes have only gone up 14 per cent, can the minister explain to the House why he and his government have consistently rejected proposals which would close the loopholes and would bring the banks up to a level of taxation which would bear some relationship to their ability to pay, which would reduce the federal deficit by over \$300 million in this year alone, which would allow the federal government to provide for the kinds of social programs that my colleague from Winnipeg North Centre was speaking about today, and which would allow the government to give help to those Canadians who need it most when the government's interest rate policies are, as I say, driving most Canadians to the wall?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I cannot answer the question because I am not aware—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: I cannot answer that question because it is based upon a false premise.