

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister once again, was the investigation into the crash flawed? Were errors made? How much longer does the Prime Minister intend to wait before he inevitably has to call a Royal Commission? Surely the families of the victims, on this anniversary, are entitled to at least that.

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to repeat for the benefit of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and other Members of the House the evidence given by Mr. Atkey before the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General, on December 17, 1987. He said:

We believe that if we launched an inquiry now, we would disrupt the investigation by forcing law enforcement agencies, security service, and individuals engaged in those agencies to concentrate on defending themselves rather than finding sufficient evidence to convict those guilty of these terrible events.

POSITION OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the real reason the Government will not initiate a Royal Commission of Inquiry is because it is trying to cover up its own negligence and gross incompetence in this matter. We know that the Government received advance warnings. We know that this tragedy could have been averted. We know that false affidavits were sworn in order deliberately to mislead a court. We know that crucial evidence was destroyed by way of the erasing of tapes.

My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Is it not true that the Government is afraid of a Royal Commission of Inquiry? It is afraid because a Royal Commission will indicate how incompetent and grossly negligent the Government was.

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, regrettably there is only one part of that question with which I can agree and that is that yes, indeed, it was a terrible tragedy. Yes, indeed, we all feel and express today a great sorrow for those families on the anniversary of this terrible, terrible accident.

With respect to the allegations the Hon. Member has made, let him come forward with some proof. We have been working very hard and diligently on this matter, and if he has evidence of the allegations, if he has proof of those allegations, then he should come forward in the House, come to see me in my office, or come to see the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to try to assist them in this investigation, instead of making unfounded allegations in the House.

STATEMENT OF CLAIM IN AIRLINE'S SUIT AGAINST GOVERNMENT

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General wants evidence. Here is the evidence. The Solicitor General knows that Air-India is suing the Government of Canada, alleging in Paragraph 30 of its statement of claim that the Government of Canada was negligent, and

because of the Government's negligence its aircraft was destroyed. It says that in the months of May and June, 1985—this is preceding the crash itself—the existence of circumstances posing a threat to Air-India's operations was brought to the knowledge of all the defendants in the form of letters and verbal communications from the plaintiff.

• (1425)

Is the Solicitor General denying here today, in the House of Commons, that Air-India did not provide advance warning to the Government of Canada that there was a threat to its operations, that there was a threat to Air-India? Is the Solicitor General saying today that the Government of Canada had sufficient security in place in order to prevent this type of tragedy?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in one sense I am amazed at the question of the Hon. Member because he is supposed to be a lawyer and understand about statements of claim. On the other hand, I am not at all surprised by the question.

The Hon. Member should know that that is an allegation contained in the statement of claim. That is not proof of the allegation made therein. No evidence has been laid as yet before a court of law. Statements of defence have been filed by the federal Government. The action has not as yet come on for trial. It is presently before the courts and we will have to await the outcome. At this point there is no evidence whatsoever to support the allegations made by this Hon. Member.

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD PRICING SYSTEM

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister or the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board. I have obtained today a draft interpretive document produced by the U.S. administration on the free trade agreement which offers drastically different views of Articles 701, 705, and 706.

It says in effect that the U.S. now claims to have review powers over the Canadian Wheat Board's pricing system. It claims that it is conducting consultation directed toward establishing a method to determine the price at which the Wheat Board is selling. It goes on to say that the ideal method would be a public price-setting mechanism transparent to the U.S. Government, producers, and processors.

Can the Government tell us anything about this particular set of consultations and the direction that the U.S. is trying to take?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the Canadian