

Oral Questions

and we did it. The other person was the president who was also an indispensable person to keep the Canada Council going.

This is what we have done. We have made the appointments and now we know the number of members on the board of directors. We shall make appointments in the future in a more routine manner.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I thought we knew how many seats were vacant and how many were needed. I certainly do not question at all the talent and the capacity of the individual who has been so appointed.

However I do question the minister's commitment to the federal agency review process. I would like the minister to tell the House what relevance that federal review process now has.

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to say that I take this review very seriously. We are the first department to have produced recommendations to the minister concerned. I am surprised to have these questions from members of the Reform Party because we are reducing expenditures and making savings in taking this action. We should be congratulated for what we are doing.

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GUN CONTROL

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Many constituents who are responsible gun owners fear they will lose freedom of gun ownership and enjoyment of game hunting while irresponsible criminals continue their objective of violence and illegal activities.

Will the minister give consideration and assurance to Canadians today that in rewriting our gun control legislation he will discern between the needs of responsible gun owners in rural areas and the criminals who smuggle and purchase firearms for the purpose of violence?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the overarching objective of the government in terms of its strategy with respect to crime and violence is the safety of Canadians. We recognize that the regulation of firearms is only a part of that overall strategy.

In so far as firearms are regulated, I can assure the hon. member that everything possible will be done to minimize intrusion upon those who use rifles for lawful, hunting and sporting purposes.

The House of Commons can expect the government to act sternly with respect to the smuggling of illegal weapons and the use of firearms in the commission of criminal offences. That will be the focus of the work that we will undertake in the months to come.

[Translation]

THALIDOMIDE VICTIMS

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Last week, *La Presse* reported that the majority of thalidomide victims had yet to receive any compensation. Of the 424 who applied, more than 318 are still waiting for the federal government to process their files.

Does the Minister of Health intend to intervene so that the victims of this tragic incident for which the federal government has already admitted responsibility can finally be compensated?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, certainly we are interested in making sure that all those who took this drug are found and compensated. However, some cases are less clear and that is where some problems have arisen.

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not realize that in most cases, the only possible proof available is circumstantial and that it is precisely because the federal government is demanding from victims this type of proof that they are being denied justice?

• (1455)

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Some proof is always required from individuals before they can be compensated. If this were not the case, we would leave ourselves open to all kinds of requests. As you know, we are grappling with debt and deficit problems. We have to scrutinize matters very closely to see if there is some way of knowing if these individuals are truly victims of this drug or not.

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[English]

CN EXPLORATION

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Last month's Liberal Party convention passed a resolution from a Regina constituency association calling for the privatization of CN Exploration and that the sale be to a Saskatchewan company. There have been rumblings that this sale may be conducted to benefit Liberal friends. Doug Richardson, a former Liberal candidate and chief of staff under Mr. Turner, has been lobbying for the sale of CN Exploration on behalf of a Regina company whose board of directors reads like a who's who of Liberals in Saskatchewan.

Could the minister assure the House that any privatization of this crown corporation will be open and that the selling price