

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SERVICE**

THREATS TO CUSTOMS OFFICIALS—MANNING OF ISOLATED POSTS

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Yesterday the Public Service Alliance of Canada released an extensive report on the health and safety hazards of customs inspectors. This document gives information on case after case where officials have been threatened or beaten up at isolated posts at Canada's borders. These locations are well known to criminal elements, escaped convicts and smugglers. Will the minister authorize funding which will allow two persons to be at these posts for every shift of the day?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I was somewhat surprised to read of the report, not having received a prior copy or having had discussions with the Public Service Alliance with respect thereto. Obviously the report will be studied, and if it is decided that there are safety issues involved of the magnitude that have been discussed at the press conference and in today's press, then clearly some action may be required.

RIGHT TO REFUSE DANGEROUS WORK

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, the minister admits that there have been extensive discussions over the years, but what we need is action because the beatings and the threats are still taking place. This report also lists work place hazards which the customs officials face, especially exhaust fumes, carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide and other fumes which are hurting the health of these workers. Since the minister has shown little sympathy for allowing federal government employees the protection of part IV of the Canada Labour Code, will the minister guarantee the right to refuse work which is dangerous, to all customs officials?

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I am somewhat astonished by the allegation that I have shown little concern about the health and safety of public service employees. In fact, I have pointed out to the hon. member for Churchill on a number of occasions that the standards established by the Treasury Board with respect to employees of the public service have, in nearly every instance, exceeded those provided for under part IV of the Canada Labour Code. The hon. member is aware of that. Therefore the allegation is completely and totally without foundation.

• (1450)

Our safety record and our concern for the health of employees are well known. As I pointed out a moment ago, if we determine that there is validity to these allegations, and the facts justify action, then appropriate action will be taken.

[Translation]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

PORNOGRAPHY—BANNING OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

A Quebec newspaper reports today that over 325,000 people have signed a petition asking all levels of government to ban the sale of pornographic material to minors.

Would the minister tell us whether he intends to change Bill C-53 so as to include a ban on pornographic publications involving minors, children? Would the minister also inform us whether he intends to amend the Criminal Code or the Excise Tax Act in order to prohibit more adequately the import of pornographic material using minors into Canada?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-53 which is now before the House is to amend the Criminal Code in order to put teeth into the provisions regarding pornography with minors. When the bill is sent to committee, the hon. member can put his suggestions, if he has any, to members of that committee. We are ready to proceed with consideration of this bill. However if we can come to an agreement with opposition parties for quick passage so that the bill can be sent to committee, we shall of course give due consideration to any suggestions hon. members may wish to make.

INQUIRY WHETHER MINISTER INTENDS TO TAX PORNOGRAPHIC PRODUCTS

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, the bill the minister refers to does not deal, to my mind, with the import of pornographic material involving minors.

I should also like to put a supplementary to the Minister of National Revenue. According to Mrs. Sheila Finestone, retiring president of the Fédération des Femmes du Québec, present laws dealing with the sale, display and publicity of pornographic material are not being enforced.

Does the Minister of National Revenue intend to levy new taxes or increase present ones on that kind of material? In addition, does the minister intend to amend the Excise Tax Act or departmental regulations in order to slow down or put a stop to the import into Canada of pornographic material involving children?

[English]

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, the levying of taxes and amendments to the act in question are not under my purview, but under that of the Minister of Finance. We implement the act as the law exists, and my officials screen pornographic material and