

Oral Questions

in the future. That, as I understand it, is what the post office is doing.

APPLICATION OF CORPORATION'S POLICY

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think it is rather contradictory for the Minister on the one hand to say that he wipes his hands of the post office and then on the other hand to make comments that seem to approve of the policy. I wonder if the Minister realizes that to label all employees and to initiate a blanket policy for searching all employees rather than to approach this in a selective manner is very provocative in the context of very sensitive negotiations that are going on at the post office. Does he not want service to continue? Will he tell the post office to take reasonable action rather than provocative action?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, absolutely. Reasonable action is the only appropriate action. I understand that this type of procedure is very common. Indeed—

Mr. Rodriguez: Where?

Mr. Andre: Twenty-five years ago when I worked a summer job, in fact I had to do precisely that.

Mr. Rodriguez: Twenty-five years ago? We had child slavery then too.

Mr. Andre: Obviously while members of the New Democratic Party are talking about not being provocative, they are doing everything they can to ensure that the relationship between the employees and the post office is as uncomfortable as possible so that they will have the strike they apparently want.

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PORNOGRAPHY

DEFINITION OF EROTICA

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, a pornography Bill dealing with violent and degrading sex is one thing. Artistic expression dealing with the human body and human emotion is quite a different matter.

My question is directed to the Minister of Justice. Apparently the female breast and the human anal region are defined in the definitions of your Bill as erotica. Does that include a person's bare backside, bottom or bum? Further, would Gauguin's nude swimmers or Rockwell's bare-bottomed children or, for that matter, the Coppertone ad, pass muster with you? Does the Minister realize that, under his definition, today's modern artists will have to prove that they are portraying erotica and not the Minister's or the Government's view of s-e-x?

Mr. Rodriguez: Just the bare facts.

Mr. Crosbie: Give her a demonstration, Ray.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I was going to ask the Hon. Member if she would not mind repeating the question. This kind of detail, based on my clear understanding that the Hon. Member does not understand the Bill, should be more appropriately addressed to me in committee. I hope the Hon. Member will speed this matter through the House of Commons so we can get into committee and I can demonstrate to her that this Bill is one which will commend itself not only to the Hon. Member but to the great thinking Canadian public.

ARTISTS' CONCERNS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, with no ifs, ands or buts, that is your definition of erotica in the Bill. My supplementary question to the same Minister—

Mr. Speaker: The Chair is listening with great care to all the words mentioned by the Hon. Member but there is one that she must not use again and that is her reference to the Minister as "you".

• (1500)

Mrs. Finestone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for keeping me abreast of the situation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marchi: What a bum rap.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, the proposed pornography Bill states that a visible display of erotica must be "hidden by a barrier" or "covered by an opaque wrapper". That definition definitely puts the Sistine Chapel out of order. Should we cover Gauguin's nude sunbathers or Rockwell's bare bottoms with what? A fig-leaf? A maple leaf? Or, should they be gift-wrapped?

How is the Minister planning to answer the artistic community which is very concerned about this issue? It is no joking matter.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, she may want to consult her colleague, George Baker, if she wants to know about joking matters. I think she needs some help. With reference to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that she does not have to refer to me as "you". A simple "sir" would do.

I want to make it quite clear that the Hon. Member's contention is unfounded. It is wrong. Clearly the Bill provides for artistic merit even in the case of erotica. If she would read the Bill and understand it, and if she goes to committee after second reading, I will be able to explain to her that her understanding of the Bill is incorrect.