

Oral Questions

My answer will be the same today. I intend to see that these rules are observed by all federal government agencies.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Quebec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Canadian Heritage endorse this offensive remark by a spokesperson for the museum, and I quote: "If we want the public to buy our new magazine, we would have to offer them a high quality product produced by competent people".

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always expect our national museums to have high quality products in both languages.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in response to a question on May 8 from the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan about allegations of sexual abuse at the Lac Barrière reserve, the minister of Indian affairs responded that it was a criminal matter and police were investigating. The band states that it is not aware of any police investigation and a recent federal-provincial-band memorandum of understanding is viewed as pre-empting a police investigation.

Does the minister continue to state that there is a police investigation into sexual abuse when the band says there is not?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I came here today prepared to commend the hon. member and his colleague in the Reform Party who went up to Barrière Lake. I thought that was very broad minded.

I sat here and listened to the statement of the pair. The aboriginal people of Barrière Lake do not have the opportunity to stand in the House and I feel it is incumbent upon me to put forward their side on what happened.

I was handed a letter that was handed to the hon. member who put the question. They welcomed the hon. members up there. They wanted to show them their way of life. The hon. members chose the topics. They asked questions like: "Is the premier of Quebec the minister of aboriginal affairs? How do you become an elder?" They met with the accountant and they refused to listen to him. They wanted to take them to show them their forestry but they refused.

They ended up by saying: "We thought we were dealing with honourable people who wanted to learn about us. We forgot we were dealing with partisan politicians who are more interested in advancing their own political agenda than in hearing the truth. As I was saying at the beginning of this letter, I hoped this meeting would enlighten you. Apparently it didn't".

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, it is a shame, a real shame.

[English]

Mr. John Duncan (North Island—Powell River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister was further asked about allegations of misappropriation of \$255,000 in legal fees to a co-president of the aboriginal committee of the Liberal Party, to which the minister responded that it was a criminal matter and up to the sûreté. According to the band, the RCMP has jurisdiction, not the sûreté, and the sûreté has done nothing. The RCMP has done little, if anything, other than a single brief visit with no follow up.

Is this a shell game or does the minister want to get to the bottom of the allegation?

• (1500)

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this allows me to clarify my answer on that date.

The investigation by the la Commission de la jeunesse is in relation to the sexual abuse. The member for the Reform Party stood up and basically under the protection of the House defamed a member of the Canadian Bar Association of Ontario. He did not have the guts to go outside and do the same thing. He should do that today. He has already received a letter from that lawyer saying if he does he will be sued for defamation.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade will be aware of the conflict between the Pinochet led army and Chile's democratic government over the arrest of two army officers convicted of murder.

Pinochet's action in Chile reminds us that unless there is a level playing field when it comes to political rights and human rights, free trade is a moral hoax.

Is the government now considering supporting the proposal endorsed by the International Democratic Union, the Liberal International and the Socialist International to create a UN based international court of human rights to bring those who have violated international human rights to justice?

Will the government indicate its intentions to work for a social and human rights clause in NAFTA and in the WTO so we can have a genuine playing field, not just with respect to tariffs but with respect to human rights?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the terms with regard to the accession of Chile to NAFTA are set forth in the agreement. A country acceding to NAFTA must meet the terms of the agreement.