

Oral Questions

We are not satisfied with those numbers. We are not satisfied with anything short of 100 per cent in meeting our targets under the Official Languages Act.

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GUN CONTROL

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Justice could not or would not answer how a national gun registry program would reduce crime. If the minister could show this evidence to support registration, most Canadians would probably support it.

Will the minister provide this House with evidence that shows how a national gun registry will save lives and reduce the criminal use of firearms in our communities?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if anyone has questions to answer about their position on gun registration surely it is the Reform Party of Canada. The very party that styles itself as the party of law and order opposes a measure that the police want in this country. The very party that styles itself as the party of the people is against a measure that poll after poll shows is supported by the vast majority of Canadians.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, for Canadians who are concerned about the cost of firearms registration and for Canadians who are concerned about crime on the streets using firearms, would the minister give them the statistics that confirm a national firearms registration program will save lives and will reduce the criminal use of firearms?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, time and again the police chiefs of this country tell us that a registry system will help us stop the traffic in illegal arms at the border. It will help us ensure that the number of firearms lost and stolen every year and end up in the hands of criminals is reduced. Time and again they tell us they need registration to enforce court orders that prohibit people convicted of crimes of violence from possessing firearms. I will take the word of the chiefs of police on that question.

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ORDER IN COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Ian Murray (Lanark—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal.

The minister announced today that hundreds of governor in council and ministerial appointments will be eliminated as a result of the agency review. I agree that this overhaul of boards and commissions is long overdue, but is it all just window

dressing or will this initiative bring real savings for Canadian taxpayers and help put an end to political patronage?

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must thank the hon. member for his question. It allows me to comment on the agency review report which was released today. The report looked at 400 commissions, boards and agencies and 120 were affected, 73 were wound up, 47 were restructured and no less than 665 governor in council positions were abolished.

To give members an idea of the scope of this review, since this government was elected, it has appointed approximately 700 persons to governor in council positions, 100 of which were reappointments. In short, the government has abolished more governor in council positions than it has appointed new persons to such positions.

We are bringing efficiency and fairness to government.

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• (1450)

[Translation]

NATIONAL PORTS

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Forty maritime organizations and businesses have asked the Minister of Transport to dismiss the chairman of Ports Canada's board of directors, Arnold Masters, from his duties. Just a few minutes ago, the minister said that he had to wait for a report from the transport committee before he could take action.

How can the minister wait for the report from the transport committee before taking action in this matter, since the committee has no mandate to review Mr. Masters' case?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a revelation: the hon. member will now wait for a mandate before raising such issues. When I appeared before the transport committee, the hon. member, instead of dealing with the problems affecting the transportation system across the country and proposing solutions, went on and on about Mr. Masters. With or without a mandate, the hon. member always knows where to dig.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since Mr. Masters is completely discredited in the eyes of the Canadian maritime industry, why does the minister not suspend him immediately now that the allegations are out in the open?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I indeed received a letter signed by several stakeholders in the industry asking me to replace the gentleman in question. However, as far as I know, the allegations are based on