

Oral Questions

workers, and if so, does he believe the government has been bargaining in good faith? Is this really free collective bargaining?

Hon. Gilles Loisele (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): At a time, Mr. Speaker, when hundreds of thousands of Canadians are without work, at a time when there are great threats to our fiscal position, we decided in the last budget to take measures. The unions were not particularly targeted, but we indicated to them that we would ask them to make a contribution as they have over the last six years by accepting very reasonable settlements. It was made very clear in the House that if these settlements are not reached through agreement, through negotiation, we would eventually have recourse to legislation.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. As members will know, the contracts for RCMP policing in two territories and all provinces except Ontario and Quebec expired March 31, and negotiations with the federal government have broken down. I join with the municipal authorities across the country in calling for an early resolution.

This matter is of critical importance to my constituents in the St. Albert constituency and, for that matter, for all Canadians.

Can the minister advise the members of this House and the public whether he has made any progress in bringing the provinces back to the table to negotiate a settlement?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that the federal government has offered to renew the present contracts with the provinces, the municipalities, and the territories for a further term of one year on the same terms and conditions as the last year of the present 10-year contract.

The provinces, for their part, have offered by telephone, and I expect to get it confirmed, that they are prepared to come back to the table to negotiate in good faith the issues of cost base, cost ratios, and accountability.

I think there is a new sense of urgency and a good feeling about the negotiations and I would hope that we can wrap them up as soon as possible.

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IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On Tuesday morning my colleague, the member for Winnipeg South Centre, submitted a letter to the minister requesting 18 specific documents related to the Al-Mashat case. We requested these documents in advance of this morning. These documents are still not in our hands. I would like to ask the minister why this is so and what has the government got to hide and why is the government inhibiting the work of members to have a full inquiry into the Al-Mashat case as promised by the minister?

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has been listening very carefully to questions, and I hope has been treating the questions and the issue properly. That is clearly a question for committee. The hon. member may want to put another question. It cannot be a question that should be put to the committee.

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, it was my understanding that this party requested these memos from the minister. It begs the imagination to understand why they have not been provided to us. I am not saying to the committee. It was not within the context of the committee that these were requested in the first place.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mrs. Stewart: We cannot understand why they have not been produced to date. I asked the minister why they were not produced, and if she will guarantee to us that they will be produced immediately so that when the committee does resume hearings, we will be able to make proper inquiries.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the documents referred to are similar to documents that have been requested by the committee.

As I am only too happy to do, we will produce the documents. They are in the process of being gathered up to bring to committee. Let the record show that this hon. member walked out this morning too.