

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 9, 1984

The House met at 2 p.m.

● (1405)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

METRIC CONVERSION

TORONTO GAS RETAILERS—WITHDRAWAL FROM APPEAL PROCESS

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, Jack Halpert and Ray Christiansen, two independent gas retailers who have stood up in defence of freedom of choice, can no longer afford to fight the federal Government in the courts. In November, 1983, the pair were awarded \$41,000 by a court when they were found innocent of any charges relating to dispensing gas in imperial gallons. To date they have not received a penny of that court ordered settlement. For this reason they are unable to raise the necessary \$25,000 for the current appeal before an Ontario County Court, and therefore must default. This appeal was initiated by the federal Government.

We appear to have a double standard alive and well here. If a person owes money to the Government through its agent, Revenue Canada, he or she must pay up immediately, and haggle about the levy or the amount later. Yet the federal Government with its unlimited resources, is able to delay or avoid paying this \$41,000 by proceeding through the various appeal stages, including the Supreme Court of Canada. Any ordinary Canadian citizen cannot counter that.

Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done. The Canadian Charter of Rights was supposed to accomplish that.

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[Translation]

BRAVERY

REQUEST THAT MR. RENÉ JALBERT BE AWARDED DECORATION

Mr. Robert Gourd (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Argenteuil-Papineau, speaking personally as well as on behalf of my constituents, I wish to offer my sincere condolences, after yesterday's tragic events at the Quebec National Assembly, to the families of the victims and to the Government of Quebec that experienced this terrible tragedy. Mr.

Speaker, personally and also on behalf of my constituents, I want to ask the House to recommend the Sergeant-At-Arms of the National Assembly, Mr. René Jalbert, to the Governor General of Canada for this country's highest award, for the bravery and presence of mind he showed in the course of these tragic events.

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[English]

POLITICAL PARTIES

LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP RACE—CANDIDATE'S PLEDGE TO CUT DEFICIT BY \$15 BILLION

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, a headline in *The Globe and Mail* of May 8 reads, "Economists skeptical of pledge to cut deficit by \$15 billion", the pledge made by one of the Liberal leadership contenders. Economists say that pledge would require major surgery on government programs, or major tax increases, or both.

The candidate refuses to spell out in detail how he would accomplish his goal, but mere mention of his intention to go after social programs has already had a damaging effect. For while economists may be skeptical about his statement, hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have to get by on the guaranteed income supplement and social assistance, are now worried that their payments will be radically reduced.

William Mackness, vice-president of the Bank of Nova Scotia, said that that proposal would mean major cuts in transfer payments for health care and post-secondary education, an end to the principle of universality for old age pensions, and the imposition of user fees for medical services.

This is the prospect a Liberal leadership candidate puts before Canadians, and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) endorses his candidacy. Such hypocrisy from that Minister, in the face of her utterances in the past year, is beyond belief. She is now willing, it appears, to let lower income and elderly Canadians pay the cost of Liberal ambitions. That is shameful, Mr. Speaker.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT

REQUEST FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION

Mr. André Maltais (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, the federal Minister of Transport has accomplished a great deal on the North Shore in the way of providing airports and docks. I