

*Oral Questions*

Through such policies this government is not only encouraging but forcing citizens in Canada to be dependent on government handouts. RRSPs allow private citizens to plan for their own retirements without government aid. That is how Canada can continue to prosper.

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[Translation]

**BILINGUALISM**

**Mr. Eugène Bellemare (Carleton—Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, the members of the Reform Party seem to take great pleasure in tabling petitions asking for a national referendum on bilingualism.

When he tabled his petition the other day, an hon. member of that party declared that the official language policy is creating dissension. Another member of the same party maintained that there was too much French in the national capital. He added that everything would go faster in Parliament if less French were spoken.

We now have two separatist political parties in the House: one that wants territorial separation; the other that wants language separation. Both go against the Constitution and against Canadian unity.

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● (1415)

[English]

**LITERACY**

**Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, illiteracy is an everyday reality for many Canadians. It is estimated that one in four Canadians has little or no literacy skills.

I am pleased that Guelph—Wellington has several groups committed to ending illiteracy.

Illiteracy crosses all income brackets and costs an estimated \$14 billion annually, both directly and indirectly. We know that job creation is the key to our economic renewal. However, with little or no literacy skills the task of retraining for some will be impossible.

More important, the social and economic ramifications of this silent disability are tremendous and the amount of lost potential is staggering.

I urge this government to continue to make literacy a priority. We must help illiterate Canadians acquire the skills to ensure that they will become the best that they can be. We need to make literacy a fundamental right for all Canadians.

**The Speaker:** My colleagues, I would draw your attention to the clock. It is now 2.14 p.m. and we have all of the statements in. I think that is a good practice and I want to thank all hon. members who were kind enough to give their statements to the interpreters. It does help a great deal and I want to thank them for that.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[Translation]

**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Yesterday, the Solicitor General had to admit there were links between organized crime and cigarette smuggling networks, in connection with weapons and drug trafficking operations on Mohawk reserves.

He also contradicted himself by first admitting that certain people had cancelled RCMP anti-drug operations and then claiming there were no no go zones for the police in Canadian territory.

How can the Prime Minister insist that the law is enforced evenhandedly across Canada when yesterday Mr. Claude Lesard, the RCMP spokesman in Quebec, stated that the RCMP was not on the reserves, despite the fact that the reserves are said to play a major role in illegal trafficking in alcohol, drugs and cigarettes?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, about the police presence on the reserves: there are three police forces. There is the Mohawk police force which is locally recognized and controlled by the aboriginal authorities. There is the provincial police, which has jurisdiction because it was given the former powers of the RCMP and which must do its job there as it does elsewhere. The third one is the federal police which is concerned with smuggling. The federal police is doing its job at this very moment.

According to our information, cigarette smuggling in Quebec has decreased considerably. If we can break up the cigarette smuggling networks, we can break up the others as well. I am convinced the police are doing a good job. We have always told the police they can go anywhere across Canada to do their job.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the government keeps changing its story. For a long time the government said, as it just said today through the Prime Minister, that the law is enforced everywhere, that the RCMP goes everywhere in Canada and that those are the government's instructions.

Yesterday, however, the Prime Minister used the word "hesitations", when he said he had never heard there were no go zones until it was said the police had some hesitations.

I want to ask the Prime Minister to explain what kind of hesitations he was referring to. Are these hesitations caused by the government's lack of political will?