

Oral Questions

so on. These letters were sent along with a covering letter signed by Wendy Cuckier of the gun coalition to all Ontario MPPs.

Would the minister explain as soon as possible how the Canadian Gun Coalition obtained these letters which were addressed to the minister?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, so desperate is the hon. member for anything to argue in his cause, so profoundly devoid of merit is his position on this issue, that he is now pretending to find in the commonplace events which he described some reason to become righteous and indignant.

The fact is that people, organizations, cities and governments across the country have written to me in support of the gun proposals. My office is flooded with faxes and letters in support of Bill C-68. Those people who write in support of the legislation either expressly or implicitly authorize and urge me to spread around their position so that everyone might know the extent to which these proposals are supported.

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[Translation]

CANADA SOCIAL TRANSFER

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday, in reference to Canada's future, the minister said that the No side was the one promoting change, as evidenced by the new Canada social transfer.

With this surprising statement, is the Minister of Finance telling Quebecers that, following a No vote on October 30, Canada's proposed change would be the implementation of the social transfer through which Ottawa will, over a two year period, deprive the provinces of 7 billion dollars, including 2.5 billion in the case of Quebec?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, the figures used by the member are not valid.

Second, the Canada social transfer will provide the provinces with a great deal of flexibility to innovate and find their own solutions to problems.

This initiative truly shows the flexibility of the federal government regarding the involvement of the provinces in social programs. Indeed, what we see here is a fundamental change of attitude for the federal government and for the country, and the member opposite should congratulate us.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, are we to understand that the Minister of Finance believes that tomor-

row's Canada is simply a matter of Ottawa deciding and the provinces paying, as confirmed by the establishment of the new Canada social transfer?

• (1445)

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our attitude is reflected in the statements made by the premiers of the other provinces, who not only recognized Ottawa's flexibility but also recognized that the country as a whole wants changes and wants co-operation between the provincial and federal governments, and said so.

Whether the issue is harmonization with the minister responsible for public service renewal, harmonization in regional development or discussions on human resources, all the other provinces are co-operating to improve life for Canadians.

One government refuses to co-operate and will not look for solutions to help its population: it is the separatist PQ government in Quebec.

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[English]

CANADIAN RESERVES

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

It seems that budget cuts are threatening the existence of the Queen's York Rangers, a Canadian reserve unit with a 250-year history. A special commission will report in the next few weeks on the future of Canada's reserves.

Could the minister confirm that no decisions with respect to the future of the reserves will be made before the commission reports?

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Queen's York Rangers is but one of many distinguished regiments that have contributed much over the years to Canada's security with long and noble traditions going back, in the case of the Queen's York Rangers, to the time before Canada became a country in assisting the British in the American revolution.

This heritage is vital to Canada's military preparedness. Earlier this year when we were discussing the rationalizations taking place in national defence I asked Hon. Brian Dickson, former Chief Justice of Canada, to chair the commission on the reserves but in the meantime gave instructions to the department not to effect any changes that would have an impact on reserve regiments until such time as the commission has reported and the parliamentary committee of the House and the Senate reviews the commission's conclusions.