

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***MONEY LAUNDERING**

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Yesterday, we learned that the RCMP's lack of co-operation with Swiss authorities had resulted in the release of two Canadian nationals who had been charged with money laundering and detained for six months in Switzerland.

Today, for the second time in a year, the U.S. State Department indicated that Canada is one of the countries where money laundering is most prevalent and easiest to do.

Since Canada is truly a sieve when it comes to money laundering, what is the government waiting for to legislate and put an end to that illegal activity?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the ease of international money transfers, money laundering by the underworld is a concern for all industrialized nations.

Through the inference of the Solicitor General, Canada is collaborating with other nations around the world to form a united front against this insidious threat to our economic security and, frankly to our laws against crime.

The Solicitor General, through his collaboration with the United States of America and European nations, is working closely with authorities abroad to take effective steps to deal with money laundering in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as was confirmed yesterday, the Canadian government is certainly not co-operating with Swiss authorities. I also urge the minister to read the U.S. State Department's report. It has plenty to say about this issue.

Does the minister realize that, because of the lack of legislation, each year \$10 billion are being laundered in Canada, and does he realize that his failure to act only encourages such illegal activity?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the incident referred to by the hon. member, the reports also indicate that action has been taken. We are collaborating with authorities abroad to make sure that effective steps are taken in that case.

In so far as legislative change is concerned, we believe that the legislation in place at present is sufficient to meet the

challenge. As I have said in the past, the Solicitor General, working with other nations, is taking effective steps to make sure that happens.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister of public service renewal acknowledged that job cut decisions based on race or sex are illegal under the charter of rights and freedoms.

Yet he indicated that government personnel managers might turn a blind eye to the charter and it is more likely that minorities will keep their jobs when the government implements public service cuts.

Will the minister acknowledge it is his duty, like every other Canadian, to respect and abide by the charter of rights and freedoms?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very easy to indicate exactly what the facts are before questions are asked.

The newspaper quotes me verbatim as saying: "Mr. Massé said he had been assured workers' rights will be respected. 'The charter of rights indicate when you are doing a restructuring in industry you have to designate your surplus workers on totally objective reasons,' he said. 'You cannot use equity reasons of that type in order to designate them'".

That indicates exactly what was said. It is totally in conformity with the charter of rights and with our policies.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying to obfuscate the problem because the charter of rights does not allow discrimination based on sex and gender and that is exactly what he has said in the article.

● (1135)

Will the minister confirm that he will give specific direction to government personnel managers to abide by the charter of rights and freedoms and tell them that employment equity plays second fiddle to the charter of rights and freedoms?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not give orders to directors of personnel. That is something deputy ministers in departments do.

The member opposite has to recognize that in this case we will apply the rules as we normally do.