

Oral Questions

● (1415)

[Translation]

INNOVATION

CANADIAN EXAMPLE

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): In the House yesterday, Mr. Speaker, during Question Period we had a display of what I think was the most degrading demonstration of Liberal-Socialist opposition I had ever witnessed since my election.

The official representatives of 700 million citizens of the free world had agreed that Canada had shown initiative and should be commended for its Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

The G-7 told us that this Agreement will be used as a model by the GATT, an organization consisting of 93 member-countries, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, I saw some Liberal Members actually cheer when their Leader made some negative comments about our major trading, social and cultural partners. I thought that some of these Liberals would know better.

Mr. Speaker, who are closer to the truth? The crazy highbrow Socialists, the outdated and ill-assorted Liberals, or the elected representatives of the free world?

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

DISASTERS

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF AIR-INDIA CRASH—REQUEST THAT ROYAL COMMISSION UNDERTAKE INQUIRY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Deputy Prime Minister. Three years ago today on June 23, 1985, Air-India Flight 182 crashed in the Atlantic Ocean killing 329 people, of whom 280 were Canadians. The families of the victims of that disaster have had no answers from this Government in three years; no answers and no facts.

Why hasn't the Prime Minister appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry into this tragedy, and will he do so immediately?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as I have said on many occasions in this House, and I will repeat it again today, there is an extremely active investigation being carried on into this tragedy by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. At no time have there been less than 50 officers working on this case, and on occasion there have been up to 250 officers.

I think it would be wrong at this time while an active investigation is being carried on to have an inquiry such as that

suggested by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition. Indeed, Mr. Atkey, Chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, advised the standing committee that to conduct a Royal Commission of Inquiry at present would be counterproductive and now is not the time to do that.

[Translation]

DEMAND THAT ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY BE ESTABLISHED

Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service erased tapes of telephone conversations about the disaster which had been intercepted, and failed to provide any satisfactory explanations for this mistake. The Security Intelligence Review Committee investigated the work done by CSIS but its conclusions were unsatisfactory. The Canadian Aviation Safety Board was unable to provide satisfactory answers. A royal commission of inquiry was appointed in India, and another one in Ireland, but none was appointed in Canada, although 288 victims were Canadians. This while Canada has established and appointed commissions of inquiry subsequent to other tragedies such as the Hinton disaster and the *Ocean Ranger* case. Why not in the case of the Air India crash, this tragedy that occurred three years ago?

[English]

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, the question just posed is basically the same as the previous one only this time it was put in French. I will repeat the same answer.

There is an extremely active investigation ongoing by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, utilizing no less than 50 officers at any given time and up to 250 on occasion. The matter has been looked into and reviewed by the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which is an independent body, chaired by Mr. Atkey, and composed of other former members of the Privy Council of Canada. They feel, after their investigation, that a Royal Commission of Inquiry at this time would be premature and would have nothing but bad effects on the investigation presently being carried on by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

● (1420)

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, premature, after three years of getting nowhere?

CONDUCT OF INVESTIGATION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and now two Solicitors General, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, the RCMP, the Canadian Aviation Safety Board and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service have all failed to provide answers about the reasons for the deaths of 280 Canadians. All we know for certain is that no charges have been laid and that an investigation has been made into the quality of the original investigation.