

Oral Questions

I would also like to point out that during the past decade, Pratt & Whitney Canada received nearly \$525 million from the federal government, and we are committed to giving the company another \$91.2 million during the next four years. So we did not exactly forget Pratt & Whitney.

* * *

[English]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the road blockade beside Adams Lake still remains in place today.

Eighty-six days after it was started by the three native bands involved there have been at least two episodes of violence involving criminal charges. Last week a bridge into a provincial park was burned.

Does the minister of Indian affairs still insist he must be specifically invited by the parties involved before he will take action?

• (1450)

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been indicated in the House on several occasions both by me and by the solicitor general, policing in the province of B.C. is in the jurisdiction of the RCMP under contract to the province of B.C.

On this specific road there are three scenarios. The best case scenario is that it is a public road to the reserve. The second case is that the owners on the other side have the right of way and then they can sue. The worst case scenario which my hon. friend seems to be moving toward is this land is owned totally by the First Nations. If that is the scenario they are entitled to close off the road on their land like any owner in Canada.

I am hoping we can work out an arrangement with them so people can get to their premises. We are prepared to work with the province of B.C. which fortunately we do in many situations. We will help out in the facilitation. Those are the facts and all the rhetoric in the House will not change those facts.

The problem was it was an archaeological dig. The person who did it was supposed to comply with the mandate from the province. That person did not. That person has been written to and still has not complied.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the problem goes beyond that. The federal government was supposed to have been involved a long time ago on the signing of that road, as the minister knows.

He has also been contacted by the B.C. aboriginal affairs minister, Mr. Cashore. He was informed on April 13 this should be treated as a top priority by this minister. He has also had that request from aboriginals and from the property owners.

I know nothing comes easy to this minister. Unfortunately that is the only thing he is good at. When will he acknowledge his responsibility under the Indian act and get involved?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all that happens is I get the same question and I give the same response. I will respond again.

The province is negotiating with the band. Hopefully a deal will be made but enforcement is a provincial responsibility. Does the hon. member want us to take the RCMP back and go into B.C. and enforce that?

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

This week has been designated as national public service week, a time to recognize and celebrate the contribution federal public service employees make to the country.

At the same time, however, the government is in the process of cutting 45,000 jobs in the federal public service. How can the government justify having a week to celebrate the accomplishment of its employees while at the same time taking away their jobs?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these are challenging times for the public service as we carry out a downsizing brought about by the need to cut government spending in order to meet our deficit reduction promises.

Our employees are dedicated, committed people and I think they deserve recognition. They have carried out a great many innovations. There are many examples of excellence in the work they do and I do not think there is any better time to celebrate the fine work done by the public service.

The public service of Canada is among the best in the world.

* * *

[Translation]

SINGER EMPLOYEES

Mr. Jean H. Leroux (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour.

Former employees of Singer in St. John say that the federal government failed to meet its contractual obligations toward them by paying the surplus that is part of their pension fund to the employer rather than the workers.