

*Oral Questions***CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE**

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. In answer to questions from the Official Opposition during committee hearings, the Director of the Canadian Museum of Nature acknowledged that the museum suffered from serious mismanagement. Disturbing facts, especially concerning the awarding and managing of contracts for consultants and the hiring of museum executives, were confirmed in the committee.

In view of the seriousness of these disturbing examples of mismanagement, is the minister ready to place the museum under administrative supervision and allow the committee to proceed with an in-depth review of the museum's management?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I am myself extremely concerned about situations like this one. The person who is most suited to carry out such a review is the Auditor General of Canada, who will do just that.

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the museum director is not waiting for the Auditor General and has already hired a firm to conduct an investigation?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, we can have both. It is quite natural for the managers of an institution such as the museum to be concerned about the quality of their own management. They carry on their affairs at arm's length, and I respect this relationship between the institution and the minister responsible for its operations.

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[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice said that for the next few weeks the Minister of Justice and the department will be studying very closely the possibility of making changes to gun control laws. We know that in the 1993 Auditor General's report it was said that we must have evaluation of the existing laws before we even know if they are currently being effective.

● (1200)

When is this evaluation going to take place, for surely it must be before we proceed with any changes to the existing laws?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the effectiveness of the laws at present are being evaluated on a continuing basis and we will continue that effort.

I want to make it clear however, in terms of what the parliamentary secretary may have said, as I have said earlier this week I am studying a broad range of options to bring forward to caucus and to cabinet for consideration, and that process is under way.

As to the effectiveness of the present laws, we simply have to look at the evidence all around us, the increasing availability of guns for people with criminal intent, to know that we have a long way to go before being as effective as many of us want to be on this subject.

Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay East): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Justice really feel there is any point in spending \$60 million on the Auditor General's department which said that an evaluation should take place and then possibly, as he has done here, come to the House and say it is fine to do the evaluation within the Department of Justice?

Should these evaluations not be made public, should they not be made transparent so that the people of Canada know whether the laws are presently working?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has made a point that is very fair but I think we are talking about two different things.

First, the Auditor General was speaking about evaluating the effect of the laws that were put on the books in recent years. That is an ongoing process. All of that will be made public. We will be determining the effect of Bill C-17 and its implementation. That is one thing and it is fully public.

The second thing, and I think evaluation is not a good word for the second subject, is this government, Bill C-17 now being behind us, is looking at other steps we might take for more effective gun control.

On that subject, what the parliamentary secretary said is that I and my colleagues in justice are putting together a list of options for further steps that can be taken. We are going to go to caucus and cabinet with that list. We are going to select a strategy we think is in the public interest and then bring it forward as proposals to this House.

The Speaker: Colleagues will have heard a few seconds ago something new we have instituted. I have ordered that the cannon be fired on Fridays at 12 noon.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.