

Oral Questions

Hon. David M. Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the logic of Reform Party members is incredible. They stood here last night and told us to get out of there and basically gave us detailed plans for a retreat. Now the hon. member is asking for the application of air power.

I would like to ask him to please make up his mind and be consistent? At least the official opposition is consistent and we respect and are grateful for its support. However, let us have some consistency of opinion in this whole matter.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general.

The action taken by the RCMP and CSIS against Pierre Laberge, a retired RCMP employee who came down in favour of Quebec sovereignty, was apparently not enough for Normand Chamberland, Director General of CSIS in Quebec, since he has just fired Mr. Laberge's wife for no reason after 10 years of service.

How can the solicitor general let Normand Chamberland, who planted bombs in Quebec in the 1970s, be so unfair to Mr. Laberge's wife, simply because Mr. Laberge expressed his support for Quebec sovereignty?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a well known fact that CSIS is cutting staff. It seems that the employee in question is part of the cuts. I have been told that this decision has nothing to do with opinions she or her husband expressed.

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it so happens that Mr. Laberge's wife was the only one not wanting to leave and that the job cut, effective June 1, was announced last Tuesday. The fact that the government condones this action suggests that she indeed was fired.

Is the government so worried about the outcome of the referendum campaign that it condones such acts of pure intimidation against people whose only crime is to have a sovereignist spouse?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the hon. member's allegations. As I just said, the decision is due to the staff cuts at CSIS and has nothing to do with the opinions in question.

• (1445)

It is sometimes not possible to lay off only those employees who want to leave. In cutting staff at CSIS and in other services, it will not be possible to get everybody who has to leave to do so voluntarily.

As I just said, this layoff has nothing to do with the opinions in question.

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[English]

CUSTOMS

Mr. Walt Lastewka (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

My constituents have expressed concern over line-ups at border points for tourists and for people working on both sides of the border. We must make border crossing between Canada and the United States easier for tourists so they will feel welcome to Canada.

What is the minister doing to relieve congestion and frustration at the border points?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of measures being taken. I would like to thank the hon. member for his concern in this area, which he has expressed on a number of occasions most forcibly.

We are in fact proposing that we make a change to the \$300 exemption paperwork at the border so it can be done without filling out a form. This initiative is a proposal at the present time. Consultations are ongoing but if the consultations are successful we expect to bring it in by August 1 of this year.

It is an initiative that is consistent with the U.S.—Canada border accord that the Prime Minister and the President of the United States signed last February. It will streamline clearance procedures, save approximately 16 person years of time for Revenue Canada and will be one of a series of measures to make our border more user friendly and less of a hassle for the honest border crosser.

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BOSNIA

Mr. Jim Hart (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, since the defence minister is so certain about the security of our Canadian troops, maybe he would like to suggest exchanging himself for the 55 Canadian peacekeeper hostages in Bosnia.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence have stated that Canada is not prepared to commit any more resources to the former Yugoslavia. In fact, Canada has no more resources. Maybe we should talk about the lack of helmets or the lack of flak jackets or our outdated, obsolete armoured personnel carriers.