

Oral Questions

citizens of Quebec or, indeed, of any other province of Canada, who work abroad for Canadian companies. There was a change in the regulations in 1980, whereby non-resident status was governed by a period of two years. Previous to that it was six months. But there were firms which entered into contracts abroad based on the previous ruling. We intend to keep our commitment to those firms, since the contracts were entered into in good faith. It is unfortunate if the government of Quebec takes a different view, but for our part we intend to keep our commitment to those workers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF HON. HUGH PLANCHE, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ALBERTA

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of the Hon. Hugh Planche, Minister of Economic Development of Alberta.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[*Translation*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

DISPUTE BETWEEN CORPORATION AND JOURNALISTS' UNION IN QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications. Last week, the CBC made the striking journalists of the French network an offer which it qualified as "final", knowing full well that some of its clauses would be rejected by the journalists, 78 per cent of whom in fact did so this week. The CBC now refuses to resume negotiations. Can the minister tell the House what steps he now intends to take in order to get the CBC back to the negotiation table?

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member pointed out, I too was advised by the CBC that last week it had made the union offers which it qualified as "final". The hon. member also knows that those offers include a 20.5 per cent increase for the last two years and a 10.5 per cent year raise for the year starting March 1, 1982. Those are the figures arrived at by the CBC. Those offers, in terms of the whole period, represent an over-all increase of 33 per cent. The Corporation itself has said its offers were final.

Mr. Bosley: Madam Speaker, the minister is well aware, I think, that the offer provides for an increase of 30 per cent, while reducing the power of the union over non-monetary matters. Madam Speaker, the responsibility of the government

and the CBC is to make sure the Quebecers are not deprived of news coverage in French, especially now that an historic election campaign is being fought. Could the minister advise the House whether his refusal to settle this strike, as he had promised he would a few months ago, is based on his opinion that this strike should continue for reasons known only to the Liberal Party, or does he want to force the union into a position which the government could use as an excuse to adopt unjustified legislation to force these workers back to work?

Mr. Fox: As the hon. member no doubt knows, Madam Speaker, the CBC management is solely responsible for its labour relations. When I referred a while ago to the final offer made by the CBC management, I failed to mention that each journalist has been offered a lump sum of \$3,500.

I certainly would like to know what is the position of the official opposition on the wage issue, and especially that of the hon. member for York Peel. I wonder if he would have the government agree to a settlement in the public sector which calls for a pay raise of over 33 per cent over a three-year period.

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● (1450)

[*English*]

NATIONAL SECURITY

BRITISH REPORT OF ELECTRONIC BUGGING OF U.S.S.R. EMBASSY IN OTTAWA

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. World-wide publicity is being given today to a British report that when the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa was rebuilt in 1954, the Canadian intelligence authorities placed electronic eavesdropping and interception devices in the building in locations suggested by Gouzenko, in order to bug conversations by members of the KGB, but that due to leaks in the Canadian intelligence establishment, when they unsuccessfully swept the building, the KGB location was deliberately moved to a part of the building that was not bugged. The primary purpose of the exercise was thus foiled because of the leaks which originated in Ottawa in the first place. Has the minister inquired if that report is true? Can he tell the House whether the report is true or false?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I have, of course, been following these so-called revelations and have been briefed about them. But, more than anyone else, the hon. member will know very well that it is not the practice or policy of the Solicitor General to comment on such allegations, and I have no intention of doing so.