

Oral Questions

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, by this action the minister tells an outraged public that crime pays.

There is no justification for rewarding John Lee, a murderer. It is disgusting. A victim's rights must be paramount, yet again the victim's family is forgotten. Justice is when the criminal pays for his crime.

Why does the minister make crime such a profitable business for lawyers and criminals, yet ignores the pain and isolation of the victims?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Correctional Service Canada is mandated by the law to carry out the sentence imposed by the court. The courts have held on many occasions that if there is negligence in the way that it is done, then there is a cause of action for negligence.

That is what happened in this case. The inmate was taken as a hostage. He was beaten with an iron bar. He sued for \$60,000. The settlement that was advised as a result of a pretrial conference by the presiding judge was not \$60,000; it was \$12,000.

There is no reward for murder or for acting illegally. It is simply a matter of following the precedents in previous cases.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN DOLLAR

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The Canadian dollar and the stock market are now on a roller-coaster ride as a result of various national and international factors.

Will the Minister of Finance admit that the financial markets' first source of uncertainty and concern about Canada is the enormous size of its deficit and its growing debt, which will exceed \$600 billion next year?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last budget was very well received by the international markets. Interest rates have fallen since then. The question we must ask is this: What will occur in four or five days? It is very clear that the referendum debate has had an enormous impact on savings, on our way of life, on job creation in this country.

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has a short memory. Two weeks after he tabled his budget, the Bank of Canada rate reached a high of 8.6 per cent, which was higher than the current 7.65 per cent rate, because that budget was poorly received and because

government finances were in bad shape. That is the main factor, as Moody's recognized in January.

How can the Minister of Finance give such answers when the Governor of the Bank of Canada himself declared on October 12, 1994: "It is only because of the high debt and deficit levels that political uncertainty has become another concern"?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if one listens to currency traders and the other parties involved, the cause of the problem becomes very clear. The hon. member and his separatist colleagues are only doing this in order to dodge the real issues, as their option will create political uncertainty, which will lead to economic uncertainty. The hon. member should say that he is in fact endangering Quebecers' and Canadians' savings, jobs and economic development.

If this has nothing to do with recent events, why has the gap between Quebec and Canada savings bonds increased so much in the past few weeks? It is because the Quebec government refuses to accept its responsibilities, which involve managing for its own people?

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• (1440)

[English]

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the justice minister.

The justice minister recently accused the Ontario solicitor general of pandering to the gun lobby. I have evidence which strongly suggests that the minister is pandering to the Canadian Gun Coalition.

Did the minister provide the Canadian Gun Coalition with copies of letters addressed to him supporting Bill C-68 without the consent of the authors?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if anyone is pandering it is members of the third party who see, for some reason which escapes the rest of us, some purpose in pursuing this subject at a time when the majority of Canadians and the House of Commons have spoken. We have already enacted legislation to act on the public will.

As to the question which the hon. member puts, I will take the matter under advisement and investigate the facts. I do not have a factual answer at this moment. I will find one and I will furnish it to the hon. member.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have in my office a package containing a number of letters addressed to the minister from the city of Gloucester, the city of Nepean and