

Oral Questions

have a task force on Kuwait reconstruction established in our department to provide advice to exporters and to register the interest of companies.

The Canadian Commercial Corporation has established a Kuwait reconstruction desk. I am announcing today the creation of a private sector liaison group on Kuwait reconstruction. I have in my hands a message from Riyadh from Mr. Craig Dobbin, a prominent Canadian businessman, saying: "It is a real feather in our government's hat, in that our group, the Canadian Businessmen, will be the first commercial visitors to Kuwait City after the war". This is from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

We are making Herculean efforts to see that we take advantage of the opportunities that are open to Canada and to others in Kuwait. We will do all we can to help in the reconstruction.

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[Translation]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. The Minister is well aware that the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples is hearing witnesses concerning the events of last Summer in Kahnawake and Kanesatake. Almost all the testimonies insist on the number of civil rights violations. How can a significant response be found if the provincial authorities do not testify and if the committee does not visit either Kahnawake or Kanesatake? And why does the Minister refuse to set up an of inquiry to thoroughly examine the situation?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my hon. friend on the quality of his French which may be superior to mine.

The hon. member is well aware that all decisions made by a Parliamentary committee concerning its business are its own. The government has nothing to do with them. Moreover, questions concerning commissions of inquiry should not be directed to the Minister of Justice, but to the proper ministers involved in these matters. My colleague the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern

Development may have his own views about such an inquiry concerning the Oka events which, by the way, are outside my purview. Although I have nothing to do with the business of the committee, I share the hon. member's interest in it.

[English]

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, the precedent was created as early as 1923 when the government instituted a royal commission to examine the army moving into settle a strike in Sydney, Nova Scotia. I think the minister will realize that the situation remains tense and is becoming perhaps more tense. If the question is not dealt with frankly and openly by all concerned parties, the situation and the problems are going to augment.

I want to know why the minister and the government will not appoint a judicial committee. We do not want to see another situation where the military is brought in to deal with a political situation.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, perhaps I should defer to my colleague in Indian Affairs and Northern Development, but I think it is important for the hon. member to understand that the causes that led up to the situation in Oka last summer are multi-discipline in terms of the government. They involve the Department of Indian Affairs, the concerns of the Solicitor General and the Department of Justice.

We are actively considering those circumstances and the best government policy to do that. Whether in fact a royal commission or a commission of inquiry is the appropriate way to go, I cannot say, and I am not sure that would not simply delay the ability of government to respond constructively.

I think there is also a problem, and it is a problem that arises in my own province as well, with respect to issues related to native people. There are a number of initiatives we are taking in the government to try to provide positive steps which we hope will deal with the underlying causes. My colleague in Indian Affairs can talk about those.

In the area of justice, I might say that I will be jointly chairing with the Minister of Justice in the Yukon a federal-provincial territorial conference on aboriginal justice this fall which I hope will provide some positive