

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs.

Tension continues to mount in Oka, where gun shots and machine gun fire have led residents to request an increase in police presence. The Sûreté du Québec has even seized an AK-47-type weapon with a laser scope, in addition to finding evidence of an impressive arsenal.

• (1440)

Considering the very serious situation in Oka, could the Minister of Indian Affairs inform the House whether negotiator Michel Robert was able to start negotiations with representatives of the Kanesatake Band Council?

[English]

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, negotiations have begun to the extent that the mediator and negotiator have met. The agenda is being done.

As to the specific question of the shooting, this is more within the realm of the Sûreté du Québec. I received indirect reports that it has the matter in hand and this will not detract from the ongoing negotiations.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Solicitor General. Does he agree that the offensive weapons identified by the police are evidence of the existence of large-scale arms smuggling, something the Solicitor General has refused to admit?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is wrong. I never refused to admit that large-scale arms smuggling existed. I said, as did the Prime Minister a few months ago, that one of the reasons for our national program against smuggling was the fact that arms smuggling was also a problem. That is why we set up the anti-smuggling program, which includes the smuggling of firearms, and we will continue our efforts with the Sûreté du Québec and other police forces.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Loney (Edmonton North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

I have received many representations from concerned constituents in my riding about the case of Alexandre Makar. Mr.

Makar is presently teaching in Edmonton. His employment authorization expires on June 30, at which time he is expected to return to Ukraine on the grounds that he is medically inadmissible due to a rare kidney condition.

Could the minister of immigration please update the House on this case?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and for the concern he and other colleagues have shown in the case.

First, as was mentioned, the individual in question is on a work authorization. He has applied from within the country for permanent status. As a result of the medical test he has been found inadmissible.

It is the classic difficult case of the compassion which has been shown to this individual by the Edmonton community and the whole question of medical admissibility which is one of the tests on which Canadians expect all applicants to be assessed. It is not something we treat lightly. Last year of the over 325,000 cases assessed medically, some 2,000 were denied.

Second, while our health system is second to none in the world, its resources are limited and involve the provinces. Consequently I have opened a channel of official communication with the premier of Alberta to ascertain the position of Alberta vis-à-vis the health care and health consequences of this individual, should he stay. Also, since the premier of Saskatchewan has gone on the public record eliciting support, I have also been in contact with his office to see if there could be anything done vis-à-vis relocating this individual in Saskatchewan should discussions fail with Alberta.

The effort is to try to balance compassion and the whole question of being fiscally responsible in terms of a viable health care system across the country when many exceptions to the rules are being requested of my department.

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DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

As I mentioned in the House last week, parolee Wayne Perkin was recently found guilty of murdering Angela Richards in my riding in 1992. When I asked the parole board for the details of the decision to release Mr. Perkin in January 1990, I was informed that information is classified since it happened before the new law was passed for hearings taking place after November 1992.

Is the Solicitor General prepared today to guarantee that he will change the legislation to allow access to parole board hearing reports that took place prior to November 1992?