

Minister, you have been at pains to convince this chamber that no member of the cabinet or no ranking officer of the Department of Justice had any early knowledge of your government's approach to the Government of Switzerland to ferret out any stuff that might be used to indict a former prime minister of Canada for secret crimes against his country.

The Leader of the Government, like the cabinet colleagues with which she runs, takes no responsibility for what was done, or said, or leaked, or what was intended to be the terrible result of that secret letter to Switzerland.

My question is: If the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were given total responsibility for the hunt for such a villain, why was no officer above the rank of sergeant found to take charge of the posse?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I would like to read that question before I attempt to respond. I will seek information for my honourable friend on this matter. As I have said repeatedly, no member of the cabinet was aware of the investigation, nor of the contents of the letter.

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Leader of the Opposition): I do not believe that.

Senator Fairbairn: You may not believe it, but it is a fact.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: I do not. Did you go after a former prime minister without at least one cabinet minister knowing about it?

Senator Fairbairn: That is precisely what I have said.

Senator Lynch-Staunton: But you are happy to go after him in letters, and call him a crook!

Senator Fairbairn: Honourable senators, I will follow up on Senator Doyle's question.

Senator Doyle: There are 1,710 sergeants presently in the RCMP force. How did they decide which one of them would get the job? Why were all of the 1,390 Mounties above the rank of sergeant left behind to restart the burglar alarms at 24 Sussex Drive?

HEALTH

CONTROL OF SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS—NEED FOR LEGISLATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: Honourable senators, will the Leader of the Government in the Senate inform this chamber as to whether the government will bring in legislation controlling the sale of tobacco products in Canada, in view of the fact that the Supreme Court has ruled on the constitutionality of the Tobacco Control Act with regard to advertising and found it lacking, and in view of increasing representation from the anti-tobacco lobby

for control of tobacco products, which cost 41,000 Canadian lives annually, and a loss to our economy of about \$15 billion?

Senator Lynch-Staunton: Tobacco kills more than guns. That is where their priorities are.

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the Minister of Health is actively looking into this question. I do not have an answer for my honourable friend now, but I will endeavour to obtain for him whatever information I can. Naturally, Ms Marleau is deeply concerned about this issue and will be trying to find the most appropriate way to deal with it.

INDUSTRY

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH—CUTS TO BUDGET—TIMING FOR RELEASE OF STUDY—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Noël A. Kinsella: Honourable senators, the research and technology community in Canada is anxiously awaiting this government's policy in the area of science and technology research. In the last budget, honourable senators will recall that this government cut \$77 million from the budgets of the National Science and Engineering Research Council and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council. They did that notwithstanding recommendations to the contrary by the Finance Committee in the other place. As well, last year's budget slashed some \$10 million from the budget of the Medical Research Council. We can understand, therefore, the concern under which the research community in Canada is labouring. Some suggest there has been an abdication of promises, which are easy to find in the infamous Red Book, and that there be stable funding in the area of research.

In a letter to the Canadian Association of University Teachers dated this month, the Minister of Industry Canada states that the federal government remains committed to making science and technology a top priority.

Honourable senators, my question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate is this: Is priority being given by her government to establishing a well-articulated and well-defined policy for Canada in the area of science and technology research?

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government): In general terms, honourable senators, the answer to that question is yes. A high priority is being given by the government to the area of science and technology. That was evident in the review carried out by the Minister of State, Dr. Gerrard. The results of that cross-country process are now being studied for possible future action.

It is true that there are budget constraints. However, science and technology research is an area which is considered very seriously, and is a high priority with this government.