

*Oral Questions*

taken place in the Beirut area. Both because of this atmosphere of violence and the unprecedented statement over the weekend, which was a combination of a written statement by Mr. Arafat and an oral statement by Representative McCloskey, we took what I believe is a very important initiative in contacting the PLO to try to determine exactly what they meant by that statement. We have their reply. I regret to say that they were not able to confirm that the Arafat declaration represented any change in the PLO policy of non-recognition of Israel. This is a disappointment to us because we had hoped that this statement might open the way to a new series of developments in the Middle East.

In addition, I might say that we have now received a reply from Israel with respect to the bombing of our premises and the inspections of the ambassador's car. They have apologized, and have undertaken to try to ensure these things do not happen again.

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**PENITENTIARIES****SHOWING OF PORNOGRAPHIC FILMS AND STAGING OF TOPLESS DANCING**

**Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. Some time ago I asked him about the practice of showing pornographic films in federal penitentiaries. At that time the parliamentary secretary told me, "I am told such films are shown. I therefore believe that prisoners are treated like people living in remote regions, in any case, in a community which is not like ours, I think that those prisoners should be treated like normal human beings, that is, capable of judging the merits of a film." In fact I thought that the practice had stopped. There is now a report that they are showing these films in Archambault and, I am told, in one of the western penitentiaries as well. There were topless dancers at Archambault.

First, is this report true, and does he agree with the practice of showing these films. Third, does he agree with the former parliamentary secretary that these people should be treated like normal human beings out on the street capable of judging the merits of these films?

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** Madam Speaker, as far as the pornographic films are concerned, pornography is covered by the Criminal Code in Canada. There are censorship boards in virtually every province which pass films to be shown in the provinces. The policy which I have in place in the Correctional Service of Canada on that score is that any film which has passed all of the necessary inspections and can be shown in the community where the prison is located can be shown inside the institution. To do otherwise would involve the Correctional Service of Canada in establishing its own censorship agency with criteria which would probably be dubious if we were to leave it to wardens, and which would vary from one region of the country to the other without any rational basis for distinction.

The conclusion which I have drawn, and I invite the hon. member's comment on it, is to allow the normal censorship process to apply in full measure. So the suggestion that remote regions have different rules or that citizens there are allowed to make judgments that ordinary citizens in the country are not allowed to make about what they see, is without foundation. The same rules apply.

With respect to the topless performance at Archambault, I am looking into it. It is certainly contrary to the policy of the Correctional Service of Canada for any such performance to have taken place. I understand that on one occasion a couple of years ago a group of musicians were playing at Archambault and, contrary to the understanding with the Correctional Service, one of the performers began to undress. I am told by some individuals that the person who was undressing was not stopped by the officials who were present. She should have been stopped but was not stopped. The policy was violated on that occasion. I am looking into the matter further to ensure that pornographic or topless exhibitions do not take place in the institutions.

● (1440)

**Mr. Friesen:** Naturally, the question is whether the classification regulations are stringent enough and whether the officials are, in fact, following them. I wonder if the Solicitor General can comment on that.

**CORONER'S STATEMENT ON CYANIDE DEATHS**

**Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary question relates to a comment made by the coroner of Montreal, Coroner Laniel. He is quoted as saying:

—he was alarmed by what appeared to be a growing incidence of cyanide use in jails in the Montreal area.

"The number of deaths that have occurred on jail premises where prisoners died by cyanide poisoning is worrying me", he said.

How can the Solicitor General, as the chief security officer in the land, explain the kind of administration in a penitentiary system which would cause the coroner in Montreal to make a statement like that?

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** Madam Speaker, two important changes have taken place in prisons in the last several years that bear on the ability of a staff, however competent, to control contraband. One is the increased access of inmates to employment opportunities inside the prison, but, outside their cells. To an increasing degree inmates are spending less time in their cells and more time in retraining programs of one kind or another within the institutions. There is no getting away from the fact that that increases opportunities for guards, however careful their surveillance, to miss contraband.

The second is a recommendation by the preceding Parliament, in the form of recommendation of the justice committee on penitentiary reform, that open visiting should be increased in the institutions. This means that instead of having to talk to