

Oral Questions

Public Works in pushing for the mine and of the involvement of the Prime Minister?

[English]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, both Judge Richard and the inquiry council have said that they are satisfied with the mandate of the inquiry. They have indicated they will inquire into the federal involvement in the Westray mine where they believe it is necessary. Of course, we will co-operate with the inquiry. We have always said we would co-operate with the inquiry.

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[Translation]

STUDENT LOANS PROGRAM

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State.

This year, the Government of Canada will expunge \$55 million in accounts receivable because of its failure to trace people who default on their loans under the Student Loans Program. We are talking about \$55 million in taxpayers' money.

Will the minister establish a line of authority this year for the recovery of student loans, because today, the banks, the universities and a number of students could not care less about taxpayers' money?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that I have already started discussions with the provinces, students and other groups for the purpose of improving the process.

There are problems with the program. We are aware of the problems and we know the rate of loan defaults, but I have also started negotiations with financial institutions to develop a new financial structure for the program, in order to reduce payment defaults and make the program more efficient.

I can give all members of this House the assurance that this thorough review of the program is progressing very well and that by the end of the year we will be able to make an announcement in this respect.

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

Last week the Solicitor General told us that occasionally he is required to be aware of the names of former CSIS informants on a need to know basis. However, he did not say anything about previous solicitors general or their political staff.

Will the minister tell this House whether the CSIS targeting committee was ever forced to permit the presence of political staff at its meetings between 1986 and 1990, thereby allowing the names of informants to be disclosed to these staff?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, naturally I am not in a position to say what happened under previous solicitors general. I have no reason to believe there has been any change in the process that would lead to the conclusion my hon. friend has made.

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree today to assist us on this, to provide to the subcommittee on national security the rules governing informants and will he assure Canadians now that information about informants has not been used for any political purpose by his office or by the offices of members of cabinet?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. friend that if he wishes to enter into discussions with the Security Intelligence Review Committee on that particular matter, I am sure its members can apprise him of whatever information is available which it is possible to reveal.

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MEDICARE

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.