

Oral Questions

In so far as the second half of the Hon. Member's question is concerned, it deals with the essence of response to the work of the Fraser Committee. My colleague, the Minister of Justice, is the Minister responsible for this.

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the Deputy Minister of National Revenue has said that despite the decision of the Court of Appeal it is "business as usual" for the Department, will the Minister explain this apparent contempt for Canada's judiciary? Rather than snubbing the courts, why is the Minister waiting for the Fraser Commission? Why does he not come forward immediately with badly needed legislation to fill this obvious gap?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I had a chance in Ottawa today to review the judge's decision. My instructions to my staff as of an hour ago were to issue new instructions to the border units stating that where the courts have found the provision is *ultra vires* the single most important principle which must be used as a guide is the rule of law. The Government is obliged to obey the law. It cannot take the law into its own hands. That is our instruction. We will, however, draw to the attention of the local authorities any importations which offend against the Criminal Code provisions.

Again, the Hon. Member in the second half of his question did not listen to my response to his first question. I do not have the authority to amend the Customs Tariff, nor do I have the authority to make changes to the Criminal Code. He may want to ask my colleague, the Minister of Justice, what action he intends to take as a result of the Fraser Committee's work, but that is an area in which I do not have any authority.

The Hon. Member, having counselled us to respect the rule of law, must also respect that I would not attempt to take the law into my own hands in terms of making proposals which I have no authority to make.

REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my further supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Justice. We in this caucus are prepared to pass legislation within 24 hours which deals with the obvious gap which the Federal Court of Appeal has left in the area of child pornography and violent pornography. Is the Minister prepared, on behalf of his Government, to give an undertaking that he will immediately bring forward the necessary legislation to deal with this obvious gap and thereby ensure that Canada's borders are not in fact wide open, as the Court of Appeal decision now leaves them?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to note that the hon. gentleman and his Party would support amendments or changes in that direction and would support legisla-

tion to replace the provisions now found to be ineffective. But I think the Hon. Member is being too selective. Pornography is pornography. I don't think that we can just concentrate on child pornography, or some other kind of pornography which particularly bothers the Hon. Member. When we bring in legislation, if that is the course we will adopt, we will bring in legislation which will apply to pornography whether it is child pornography or any other type of pornography. It will have to be quite specific in light of the decision that the court has given.

I can only advise the Hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, that we are reviewing the situation to see whether that is the best course. We are glad to have the co-operation of the New Democratic Party. I imagine that the Official Opposition is against pornography as well, and that it will join in seeing that the legislation will go through the House within a very short period of time. I welcome the assistance of Hon. Members on all sides of the House and I am sure that the Hon. Member's offer will be taken up in due course.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—APPOINTMENT OF CANADIAN AND UNITED STATES ENVOYS

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister and it is in respect to the question of acid rain. A leading environmentalist has said that envoys are better than nothing. But with 30 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide falling on us every year, mainly from United States sources, and from Canadian sources to a lesser extent, killing lakes, destroying forests and crops, and affecting human health—and this is all documented by research—would the Minister tell the House how appointing two envoys would help this situation? Is it not simply delaying a program of action? We have heard it all before, Mr. Speaker. "Got a problem? Appoint a committee".

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member has heard it all before, why did his Government not do something about it? For how many years have we heard this issue raised? Yes, we have done something about it. We have come to a very significant agreement with the provinces to move in this regard in Canada. We have come to an agreement with the United States to work jointly on this issue within the next year by appointing two people whom the Hon. Member may dismiss out of hand, but whom many people in this country believe are individuals who can move this very important issue forward to the solution which we all want to see.

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCES

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has entirely missed the point. Is the Minister not aware that several plans of action were presented by the