

*Oral Questions***CUSTOMS AND EXCISE**

## EVASION OF DUTIES BY AMWAY CORPORATION

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue and it concerns the financial dealings of Amway Corporation with Canada Customs. I have before me confidential company documents revealing a massive and deliberate scheme by Amway to defraud the Canadian Government of millions of dollars in customs duties. Since the Government filed civil suit in 1980 to recover these funds and penalties, Amway has not even filed a defence, while it tries to negotiate a settlement on cordial relations with the Canadian Government.

Will the Minister assure this House that this civil action which has been delayed for so long will proceed forthwith, and that no cosy, secret deals will be made to allow Amway to escape full responsibility for this unprecedented corporate rip-off?

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Bring back Rompkey.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows perfectly well that yesterday, or rather towards the end of last week, the Attorney General of Ontario laid criminal charges against this corporation. The Hon. Member also informed the House that in 1980, the Government of Canada, or rather the Department of National Revenue, had filed a civil suit with the Federal Court. The Department of National Revenue does not make a practice of trying to make secret deals with respect to funds owed to the Government of Canada, and that will certainly not be the case here either.

[English]

## REQUEST FOR DETAILS OF POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Madam Speaker, the Minister has still not answered the question of whether or not this civil action which has been delayed for three years is in fact going to proceed forthwith.

If the Government insists in making a deal with Amway, as they have been hoping, will the Minister in fact assure the House that all terms of such a deal will include full financial recovery of unpaid duties plus interest, plus penalties, and that the full terms of any such deal will be made available to the Canadian public?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Madam Speaker, regarding the first part of the question which I had overlooked, namely, does the government still intend to pursue its civil action—of course we do. However, as far as the date is concerned, the Hon. Member will understand that depends on the other charges laid against the same company, and we are waiting for advice from the Department of Justice

as to the kind of action we shall be taking in future with respect to the civil proceedings.

As far as any deals between the Department of Revenue and the corporation are concerned, I may point out to the Hon. Member that it is not customary for the Department of Revenue to negotiate when money is owed to the government. We establish what we believe is the fair market value of goods for customs purposes. If the company or the opposing party objects to or challenges the Government's decision, they may appear before the Department to discuss any new data they may have, and if they manage to convince us that the new information alters the situation, we will change our assessment. However, we do not negotiate and there is no horse trading when money is owed to the Government of Canada.

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● (1440)

[English]

**AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

MICHAEL PITFIELD, C.V.O.

**Hon. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It follows upon the question I raised on Monday last. It concerns the acceptance of an award or a title by the Clerk of the Privy Council, Mr. Pitfield, given by the Queen of Great Britain. Does the acceptance of this award or title by the Clerk of the Privy Council mean that the Government has changed the rules on the acceptance of foreign titles and for awards by Canadian citizens? In this particular case, did the Prime Minister or the Government give permission for the Clerk of the Privy Council to receive this award from the hands of the Queen of Great Britain?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, the question of awards, honours and titles is a very complicated one that I always have some trouble getting clear in my mind. Very often Members of Parliament and other officials get offers from various foreign countries and we are obliged to advise them to refuse the offers. I know that I have been in that situation myself on several occasions.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** I can, however, clarify this particular matter because there have been precedents in many cases during the time that I have been Prime Minister.

The Royal Victorian Order is an Order personal to the Queen. She appoints recipients of an honour under that Order on her own volition, without advice from the Prime Minister of Great Britain or, for that matter, the Prime Minister of Canada. There is sometimes information conveyed that it will happen, but never is it on a recommendation of the Prime Minister that Her Majesty awards such an honour.