

Oral Questions

I can say that any concerns anyone in the administration of justice system has about the quality of any of our agents can be communicated to the regional office and their comments will be considered; but we are satisfied that the agents we have in place are competent to carry out work on behalf of the people of Canada.

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My officials have prepared a response which I have in draft form on my desk. I shall get that response on these points to the hon. member and his colleagues within the week.

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● (1135)

JUSTICE

[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, three times this year the Minister of Justice was unable to explain why individuals and businesses in Quebec receive only 5 per cent of the value of professional and special services contracts awarded by his department and has even expressed some doubt about this percentage. However, his own officials confirm our allegations.

After studying this matter for three months, can the Minister of Justice explain to us why his department awards 15 times more contracts to residents of his province, Ontario, than it does to residents of Quebec?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a subject that two of his colleagues raised on earlier occasions.

I have a draft response on my desk to which I should have got this week but did not. I will see the written response is in the hands of the hon. members who asked the questions next week. It will furnish a detailed response to the questions that have been raised on this subject.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the minister has been studying this matter for three months but has yet to give us an answer. The Minister of Justice has also said in this House that he did not believe that 98 per cent of professional and special services contracts are drafted in English. But, once again, his officials say the opposite.

Is the Minister of Justice still of the opinion that the fact that research contracts awarded by his department are drafted in English only accurately reflects the reality of bilingualism within his department?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has the right to expect a detailed and factual response to these questions. Both the hon. member and his colleagues have asked specific questions about the number and percentage of contracts that have been awarded and the use of language in specific work done for the department.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, every Canadian knows full well the story of 15-year old Tara Manning from Quebec and how she was sexually assaulted and stabbed 47 times.

Every Canadian's heart goes out to her family and is outraged that a killer may go free if a court upholds the claim that the killer's rights were infringed by a judge granting a warrant for a DNA search.

Since the minister knows full well that in order for the perpetrator of the crime to be held accountable legislation must clear the House before the summer break allowing a judge to grant a DNA search, will the minister immediately bring the legislation before the House?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very aware of the case. I met with Mr. Manning, the father of the victim, and with his parents. I was very much affected by the sadness of the tragedy, particularly for the family.

I am not going to discuss the Manning case because it is pending in the courts. However I will respond on the subject of DNA testing and I will say that the government has said it would introduce changes to the Criminal Code to provide a further basis upon which authorities could take samples for DNA testing for prosecution purposes.

I should point out to the hon. member that there are provisions in the code at present which are being used for that purpose. Nothing I say is intended to suggest that those are insufficient for that purpose at this time.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians continually hear the government and the minister state that they will change legislation to enhance public safety. It has been 19 months and I have not seen it yet.

Canadians should have confidence in the justice system. We are waiting for the drunkenness defence bill. Now we are waiting and waiting for this legislation, which will definitely serve a purpose in the country and solve the problems.

How could the minister dare speak of justice when he completely abandoned the most basic concept of humanity, that when a person is murdered society must punish the murderer?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member