

[English]

## EDUCATION

## SUGGESTED FEDERAL GRANTS FOR NEEDY STUDENTS

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State. It relates to the protests which are taking place on many university campuses today. Given the fact that some provincial governments have announced funding cutbacks to universities, which will be reflected in higher tuition fees and reduced student aid, thereby discouraging many young people from attending post-secondary institutions and throwing them into a disastrous labour market, will the minister urge the government to institute an emergency program of federal grants for needy students, since the present federal loan program alone does not meet student needs and is only an invitation to go deeper into debt?

**Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about this problem. It is for that reason I hope to be able to introduce in the House very shortly amendments to the Canadian student loans plan. I hope the hon. member will be able to give me his assurance that his party will give prompt and speedy passage to those legislative changes.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Symes:** Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the minister knows full well that national students' organizations object to merely increasing loans because that decreases the grants allotted to students, I hope the minister takes my first question seriously. By way of supplementary, since graduating or terminating students must begin repayment of student loans six months after leaving their educational institutions, and in light of the disastrous unemployment rate, will the minister ensure that any bill to amend the Student Loans Act will provide that students need only begin to repay the loans after first obtaining full-time employment?

**Mr. Roberts:** Mr. Speaker, I have already given the hon. member that assurance privately that I will explore this.

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## FINANCE

## REPORTED PRESSURE ON SUN LIFE TO STAY IN MONTREAL

**Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Has he seen a copy of the question which I asked yesterday in the House concerning the Registered Retirement Savings Plan conversions?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have checked with people in my office and in the department. There is absolutely no foundation to that rumour.

80033-30½

## Oral Questions

## ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

## INQUIRY WHETHER CHARGES LAID UNDER OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Justice in his capacity as the chief law officer of Canada. Has he had any requests from any other minister, or from anyone, to lay any charges under the Official Secrets Act against any persons in the media or in any corporation? If so, has he made a decision in that regard, in light of his statement in the *Globe and Mail* this morning?

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member would agree with me that it is a long-standing tradition in the House for attorneys general or law officers of the Crown not to speculate on whether charges are going to be laid. Therefore, I will not answer his question except to say at this point that I have signed no consent for any prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act. I appreciate the fact that the hon. member for Leeds and other hon. members of the House have a lively interest and, in fact, a right to know as quickly as possible what my position may or may not be. At the same time, I hope the hon. member for Calgary North appreciates that in a matter of this nature my decision should be arrived at with some care.

● (1452)

## PENITENTIARIES

## ST. JÉRÔME—INVOLVEMENT OF GOVERNMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS RESPECTING HOSTAGE-TAKING INCIDENT

**Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General to whom I gave notice a few moments ago. The question relates to the hostage-taking incident in St. Jérôme at the provincial institution. I acknowledge that it is a provincial responsibility, press releases in the last hour have indicated some form of approach to the federal government, presumably to the Solicitor General or the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

I ask the Solicitor General if it is his position that any direct involvement by the federal government would only be at the request of the province of Quebec and its appropriate minister, or would the federal government become involved on the basis of a request from the negotiators, for example?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, the former case is the one I have followed and intend to continue following, namely, that the proper channels will have to be followed, and that would be through the intermediary of the minister of justice of the province of Quebec.