

Oral Questions

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INDIA—RED CROSS MONITORING OF PUNJAB SITUATION

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It concerns the situation in the Punjab. The Minister may know that at present there are two delegates from the International Committee of the Red Cross in New Delhi monitoring the situation in the Punjab very closely. They will soon determine if there is a need for humanitarian and relief efforts by the International Red Cross. Has the Minister been in touch with the Canadian Red Cross on this matter and is Canada prepared to give assistance to these humanitarian and relief efforts?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have been, obviously like the Hon. Member, monitoring the situation in the Punjab. We are quite distressed at the developments, particularly the situation that may affect the Canadians who are in that area.

● (1440)

The Hon. Member knows that this is basically a matter for the Government of India; it is an internal matter. Certainly we would be sympathetic, as we have been in the past, to lending our help on humanitarian grounds where there is an international move to do that. If this happened in the Punjab, we would certainly apply the same generous principles as we have in the past.

REQUEST THAT DEPORTATION ORDERS BE STAYED

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister, in reply to my second question, will tell us what communication there has been with the Government of India concerning Canadians in the area. Then, in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I wonder if I could direct my second question—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member has one supplementary question.

Ms. Jewett: I will direct my second question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. As he knows, there are a number of Sikhs in Canada facing deportation. Could the Government assure us that while the violence in the Punjab continues those deportation orders will be stayed?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on that precise point it is a matter I would have to draw to the attention of the Minister responsible for immigration procedures. While we are dealing with that subject, I should add that the Government of India has advised us that it will require visas for Canadians entering that country. That rule will apply on June 15.

Obviously we have been following the situation in the Punjab with respect to Canadians. There are, known to us, about 50 Canadians in that area. It has been declared a restricted area. It may be that the Indian Government will ask people not to remain in the area. We have no reason to believe at the moment that there is any cause for apprehension about Canadians in the Punjab.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

HIRING OF PENSIONERS—REQUEST THAT STUDENTS BE EMPLOYED

Hon. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. Last Friday I asked the Acting Prime Minister if he would look into the practice of CN hiring back pensioned off employees to look after running trade operations in western Canada in the movement of grain. I pointed out at that time that CNR was not, as was its usual practice, hiring students, or young people trying to get into the labour force. Will the Minister of Labour investigate my accusation, get in touch with CNR, ask it to desist in this practice, and to hire young people and students who normally seek summer jobs on the CNR?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, indeed it is a surprising policy on the part of CNR. I will bring the representations of the Hon. Member to the attention of the Minister of Transport. I am sure the Minister of Transport will discuss this matter with CNR officials and will report to him and the House as soon as possible.

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POOLS

CANADA SPORTS POOL CORPORATION—FINANCIAL POSITION

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the amateur sports Minister. Does he know how much the sports pool has been losing per week?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Olivier (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I had a meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Directors last Friday, and I met the Chairman of the Corporation this week. I am therefore familiar with the operations of this Corporation.

[English]

Mr. Beatty: We are making progress, Mr. Speaker. I might add that the Government has managed to do the impossible. It has found a Minister who makes the Minister of National Revenue look good by comparison.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!