

NATIONAL DEFENCE

REQUEST FOR MORATORIUM ON PROSECUTION OF NATIVE PROTESTERS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will be aware, I am sure, of the judgment brought down in the provincial court of Newfoundland which acquitted four Innu protesters of the charges brought against them by the Crown. I would like to ask the Prime Minister if the Government would be willing today to give a commitment not to appeal the decision of the provincial court, to drop the charges against the other protesters, to declare a moratorium on low-level flight testing and to reach the negotiated settlement with the Innu people that the judgment recommends?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the decision having been rendered by the magistrate, the matter now reverts to provincial hands because of their responsibility for the administration of justice within the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. My understanding is that it is up to the Crown Attorneys in that area to act in light of the advice, I suppose, they will supply the Crown.

LOW-LEVEL MILITARY FLIGHTS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): This is an opportunity for the federal Government to show leadership. It is obvious that the case has come about as a result of a complaint lodged by the Department of National Defence. It is a Canadian Armed Forces base. It is a Canadian federal policy to have that low-level flight testing there. It is about time the Prime Minister took his responsibility in this matter and answered the questions that I asked him today in the House. Furthermore, we know that the Minister of National Defence is in Brussels at a NATO planning group. Isn't this the opportunity for the Prime Minister to tell that Minister to inform our NATO allies that the deal is off, the low-level flight testing is no longer acceptable in this country?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend asks me a question with regard to the administration of justice. The implication of the second question is that we should step in and try to order the Attorney General of Newfoundland and Labrador to follow a given course of action. Of course that would be most improper for the administration of justice. With regard to any issues that involve NATO or low-level flights, that is an entirely different matter. It would be resolved in an entirely different forum.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

What is being sought, of course, is justice and fairness for the native peoples of Labrador, and economic growth and expansion for the people who need work in Labrador. That is what we are looking for.

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REGISTERED RETIREMENT PENSION PLANS

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

As many Hon. Members are aware, registered savings plan funds which are invested through a life insurance company are essentially removed from any claim or demand by creditors. This is a situation made possible, I understand, by the provisions of the Insurance Act. However, RRSPs which are held or invested otherwise, such as through a trust company, are generally available to satisfy demands of creditors in a bankruptcy or similar situation.

Many Canadians feel that RRSPs are the savings plans of last resort and their security for providing retirement income should not be at risk, irrespective of other financial contingencies which may happen in our lives.

In the reform of laws dealing with bankruptcy, as set out in the Speech from the Throne, will the Minister's Department undertake to consider seriously the merits of removal of RRSP funds as vulnerable assets, much in the same manner as they are protected from creditors under the Insurance Act?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Boudria: Say yes or no.

Mr. Valcourt: That is about all one could answer.

Mr. Boudria: I did not think that one could answer both.

Mr. Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for his question. The question he raises is an important one. As the Government indicated in the Speech from the Throne, we will proceed with a reform of the Bankruptcy Act. We know that many previous Governments have attempted to reform the Act without success. Hopefully, in this Parliament, with the co-operation of all Members, we can reform this important law for all Canadians.