

Oral Questions

was visiting Ethiopia, and that we were in touch with our ambassador who was also monitoring the situation. It is correct that the camp had to be evacuated because of the rainfall, which was making it difficult for the people to stay there.

I have been informed that the refugees received several pounds of food as well as seeds and farm implements before leaving, that the infrastructure is still intact, and that our ambassador is supposed to meet the senior UN official at the end of his visit in order to discuss the situation, and I can give the House the assurance that we shall be monitoring the situation very closely because we too have a sense of responsibility.

[English]

REQUEST FOR INSPECTION OF SITUATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Minister, that is simply not good enough.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: I find it incredible that the President of the Treasury Board would be laughing about a matter as serious as this. If he finds humour in the Ethiopian situation, then there is something very sick and wrong with him.

My supplementary question is for the Minister of External Relations. Would she ask our officials in Ethiopia to undertake a personal visit to the area and not rely upon second or third hand reports, and from that direct visit ascertain what direct action this country might take to alleviate suffering which other international observers and observers from non-government organizations have said will result in the extinction and death of thousands of people if that march continues?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I think there is a very positive element in the present situation and that is the fact that after waiting for rain for months, it is now raining in Ethiopia. We intend to pursue our commitment to the famine victims in Ethiopia, and we shall continue to send help. Our non-governmental organizations will be monitoring the situation and taking care of distributing the aid we shall be sending, and our ambassador, as I said before, is very carefully monitoring the present situation on our behalf.

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[English]

PROSTITUTION

CHILD PROSTITUTES—COMMISSIONS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. The Badgley Commission last August submitted a comprehensive report which very clearly documented the shocking incidence of sexual abuse of

young people, which often leads them into a life of juvenile prostitution.

Why did the Government refuse to accept the unanimous recommendation of the Justice Committee, the Badgley Commission, and the Fraser Commission, all of which urge the Government to undertake social and economic measures to deal with juvenile prostitution? In particular, why did he not toughen sanctions against customers of child prostitutes, instead of doing as the Minister did yesterday in his Bill, driving them further into a life of crime, violence, and dependence on pimps?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Government has not rejected any recommendations of the Badgley report nor of the Fraser report as yet. The Government is dealing interdepartmentally with these many and complicated recommendations and with the provinces which are involved in almost all phases of these serious social problems. I am expecting that we will have a range of legislative suggestions in this area that will be put before the House next fall. We are acting.

We acted yesterday to carry out one of the main recommendations of the Fraser committee report. It said that with respect to street prostitution citizens are entitled both to consideration by the law, and more than that, to forms of legal protection which can be effectively enforced. We have put before the House legislation dealing with street solicitation which can be effectively enforced so that the public streets of Canada can be recaptured for the use of ordinary citizens and controlled by the police as they should be.

BADGLEY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, obviously on this question, as on so many others, the Minister is basically trying to work both sides of the street.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Robinson: There is nothing there at all on juvenile prostitution.

In view of the fact that the Government has been studying the Badgley Commission recommendations for over eight months without taking action on a single recommendation, how much longer will we have to wait before the Government does respond to the recommendations of the Badgley Commission? Will the Minister assure this House and, through this House, Canadians, that he will respond on behalf of the Government to those recommendations at least before the House rises for the summer recess?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is soliciting an answer.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!