

Oral Questions

The chiefs put their reputation on the line when they made the charges. Today the Government's credibility with Indian people is on the line. The Minister must sit down with the Indian chiefs to work out a proper response to these charges of departmental abuse.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TRIBUTE TO PAGES AND HOLIDAY WISHES TO MEMBERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I too would like to congratulate the students from Carleton University and the University of Ottawa who served us so well as pages this year and I would like to wish them a good summer.

I also wish all Members on both sides of the House a pleasant and, if possible, relaxing summer.

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DISASTERS

STATUS OF CRIMINAL INQUIRY INTO AIR-INDIA CRASH

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): My question is directed to the Solicitor General and concerns a rather delicate matter. I am referring to the Air-India crash in which 329 people, most of them Canadians, lost their lives.

The Solicitor General is aware that the victims' families are still very much affected by this disaster and are waiting for answers.

Could the Minister report to the House on the status of the criminal investigation being conducted by Canada and inform the House when he expects it to be completed?

● (1115)

[English]

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that the criminal investigation is still under way. We are not in a position to lay charges at this time, but the investigation is continuing.

REQUEST FOR ROYAL COMMISSION INVESTIGATION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a supplementary question on this subject to the Prime Minister. There have been public inquiries into this crash in both Ireland and India, yet the majority of passengers on the plane were Canadian. This week both the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Canadian Security Intelligence Review Committee indicated that the plane was bombed by terrorists. Does the Prime

Minister not feel that it is in the public interest to have a Canadian Royal Commission thoroughly investigate this crash?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, an unprecedented degree of resources has been committed to this police investigation. The police and the Government are determined to prosecute those responsible for this act of horror.

SECURITY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in its report the Security Intelligence Review Committee says:

We were concerned with the intelligence produced in this matter and the quality of airport security in general.

This is a matter of intense public importance. Would the Prime Minister not agree that we need a wider and public inquiry of this crash?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Aviation Safety Board has looked into this. There are ongoing police investigations and, as well, investigations by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service under way.

Yesterday the Member for York South—Weston indicated that the individuals suspected of being responsible for the Air India crash had been able to flee the country and escape prosecution. That is not the case.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): What is the case?

Mr. Kaplan: Do you know who they are?

REQUEST FOR JUDICIAL INQUIRY

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, it has been over a year since the tragedy occurred. There has been an inquiry in Cork, Ireland, and another in India. We still do not have the benefit of those two reports, specifically the report conducted by Judge Kirpal in India. Many disturbing questions remain unanswered. The Security Intelligence Review Committee has now called into question the role of the Security Intelligence Service.

I would like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. In view of the questions that have been raised in this matter, and in view of the fact that many of the passengers were Canadian, will he undertake now to initiate a judicial inquiry in order to answer the disturbing questions which remain unanswered?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, in the Hon. Member's question he indicated quite correctly that the Security Intelligence Review Committee is presently reviewing whether the work done by CSIS was adequate. Let us allow it to do that job.