

Oral Questions

the hon. member in the House or in committee the other day that we have no ongoing activities in terms of foreign aid or the like with regard to Cuba, other than certain programs which now are being wound up or phased down, and that we have no new initiatives in place.

On the premise, presumably, of the question, let me repeat what I said in the committee—we deplore unequivocally the presence of Cuban forces in Africa or anywhere else where there are troubles of that kind, and we have been making all manner of representations to them in the hope of getting them to withdraw.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Wash your hands.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice: it concerns the lack of definition of the term “bona fide gun collector” which has never been defined by the legislation, Bill C-51, or by regulation. My question is twofold. Is the minister aware that there is a vacuum created by the law for bona fide firearms collectors who are required to obtain certain certificates by law in order to legalize their collections of firearms, and is he aware that the commissioner says he is powerless under the law to approve those certificates?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Calgary North will recall the discussion on this matter in committee where, on the advice of draftsmen, it appeared that that was the best possible definition or wording which could be arrived at in the circumstances of that bill, and that it was virtually impossible to spell out a more definitive definition than “bona fide”.

The hon. member will also recall that the representatives of the RCMP who administer that part of the Criminal Code spelled out in committee their view of what a bona fide gun collector was and what the ingredients of “bona fide” were or would be. Therefore, it seems to me that it is a section which can be interpreted. Whether or not the commissioner has expressed some difficulty with this, I am unaware because he would have reported that to the Solicitor General. I will take notice of that particular aspect of the question.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I point out to the Minister of Justice that I hold in my hand a letter dated February 27, 1978, to the New Glasgow detachment of the RCMP. The letter is signed by J. H. Hodgins, superintendent, officer in charge of “B” branch, identification services. The letter says:

The commissioner has now received legal advice from the Department of Justice which holds that he lacks legal competence to process applications—

The Department of Justice is the minister’s own department. The minister’s officials have told the commissioner that he has no right to grant applications. In light of the fact that the

[Mr. Jamieson.]

minister is not running again, and that he will not be Minister of Justice, will he accept his responsibility today, stop waffling and set out the guidelines in reference to this matter in order to end frustration across this country?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I already indicated to the hon. member that I would take notice of the question and see that it is answered.

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POST OFFICE

VALIDITY OF INCREASES IN POSTAL RATES

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Postmaster General. In light of the fourth report of the Joint Standing Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments which I have discussed with the hon. gentleman, a unanimous report from this House and the other place, which for the second time in a year takes exception to the method of raising postal rates by order in council and regulation on the ground that they are of doubtful legal validity and offend principles laid down by parliament, will the hon. gentleman review his position in this matter, reject the advice given by his principal civil servants and, rather, accept the opinions tendered by parliament and come to parliament to secure legal and proper authority to raise postal rates?

[Translation]

Hon. J.-Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I must say that the postal rates have been increased legally, as I have already indicated to the House, and we have no intention of changing our present way of doing things.

● (1502)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

DOCUMENTS RESPECTING CANADIAN POSITION

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) I ask for permission to table, in both official languages, documents pertaining to the Canadian position with respect to the conventions and recommendations adopted at the 59th and 60th sessions of the International Labour Conference in Geneva in June of 1974 and June of 1975.