

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FINANCE**REASON FOR PROSPERITY OF BANKS IN VIEW OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCREASE IN NATIONAL DEBT**

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

According to the official *Gazette* of Canada, within the five-month period between October 31, 1976 and March 31, 1977, chartered banks' assets went up from \$121 billion to \$133 billion, an increase of \$12 billion over the previous year. Can the Minister of Finance explain why chartered banks in this country are so prosperous while Canada's debts are increasing and unemployment is so disastrous?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is a relation between both facts.

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[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**BREAK-IN AT L'AGENCE DE PRESSE LIBRE—DATE OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT**

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I have a supplementary question for the Solicitor General arising out of the line of questions involving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, specifically with respect to L'Agence de Presse Libre matter. I understand that the sentencing of the three police officers in question, including one from the RCMP, will be delayed now until June 16. Would the minister be prepared to confirm this, and will he also be prepared to confirm that immediately following that event he will be making a statement in the House giving a full disclosure, as was undertaken by the Prime Minister and indeed the minister himself?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on both counts. I have been informed by the attorneys of the Department of Justice that the trial judge in Montreal heard the arguments of the defence attorneys and the Crown attorneys this morning in Montreal and decided to postpone handing down the sentence until June 16. It will be my intention to make a statement in the House on June 17, the day following the handing down of the sentence.

REASON FOR FAILURE OF FORMER MINISTER TO BE INFORMED OF PLANS FOR VIOLENT DEMONSTRATION OF ANNIVERSARY OF 1970 CRISIS

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the news report also indicates that counsel at the hearing today representing Chief Superintendent Donald Cobb said that the special anti-terrorist squad had received information that a violent celebration of the second anniversary of the 1970 crisis was planned by FLQ members and that that anti-terrorist squad had received that information some five months earlier. I emphasize the fact that it was five months earlier. If this is

[Mr. Fox.]

true—and I think the statement should cover that—would the minister make some special inquiries to ascertain how this information which was in the hands of the RCMP some five months earlier could not have been in the hands of the then solicitor general, who was responsible for the RCMP?

While I am on my feet, I would like to ask the minister to undertake that the special prosecutor in the case was not binding the Solicitor General and, indeed, the government when he is alleged to have told the trial judge—and I am now quoting from the release—that the break-in and the nature of the operation will not be made public because of the special nature of this affair and because it involves state secrets. Is the minister bound by this statement? Has he had anything to do with instructing the special prosecutor with respect to this matter? Does he accept that limitation? In other words, is the Solicitor General's statement to be a full statement as has been originally promised by the Solicitor General and, indeed, by the Prime Minister?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, it is quite evident that the special prosecutor who handled the matter before the court in Montreal was appointed by the attorney general of the province of Quebec, and as such I have not been in touch with him, nor have I given instructions. It would not be proper for me to be in touch with him or to give him instructions. What he said in the course of his argument is not binding on the government of Canada.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**SUGGESTED WITHDRAWAL OF CLAUSES IN BILL C-51 IN VIEW OF NUMBER OF UNAUTHORIZED WIRETAPES**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in light of the answers given by the Solicitor General to the hon. member for New Westminster and in light of the fact that we heard powerful evidence today from Mr. Chappel, Mr. Cartwright and Mr. Cooper, members of the Law Society of Upper Canada and distinguished Queen's Counsel, as to the number of unauthorized buggings or wiretappings, would the Minister of Justice now consider repenting and withdrawing those clauses in Bill C-51 which would usurp the civil rights of Canadians everywhere?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the evidence to which the hon. member referred because I was obviously not in the committee. Those amendments which are in committee are being studied, and in due course the committee will report. I have had an opportunity to read the brief from the Advocates Society of Ontario. Some of it I find to be a very useful contribution, namely, the latter part which proposes that where an application for a wiretap is made, notification must be given of previous applications. However, I take very considerable exception to the part about solicitor-client communications. I indicated at second reading that it seemed to me to be fundamental to our system that the citizen must have the right to communicate with his counsel