

QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

THE SENATE

PRAYER AT COMMENCEMENT OF SITTINGS

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, last Tuesday, after expressing discontent about the form of the new prayer, Senator Bélisle wanted to know who was responsible for dropping the Lord's Prayer.

Honourable senators, I took that responsibility, but only after the customary precautions. I found out through appropriate research that the prayer in the House, that is in England, dates back to the 16th century. The Speaker's chaplain would read a noble prayer acceptable to all denominations. According to the words then in use, the Speaker was expected to read a prayer "such as he shall think fittest for this time to be begun every day". The custom was carried on, so much so that at the end of the Elizabethan reign the Speaker had to read a prayer of his own composition.

In keeping with the earliest tradition, I thought I would draft our common prayer, keeping in mind the diversity of beliefs.

Thank you, honourable senators.

● (1440)

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

JAPANESE-CANADIANS—GOVERNMENT APOLOGY AND COMPENSATION

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, I should like to ask a question of the Leader of the Government in the Senate.

In the other place, on June 29, 1984—the final day of the last Parliament—the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, then the Leader of the Opposition, asked the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Pierre Trudeau, for a formal apology by the Government of Canada for actions taken by the government during the Second World War and thereafter respecting Canadians of Japanese descent, wherein he stated that their rights had been trampled upon.

Earlier, on May 16, 1984, in an interview published in the *Globe and Mail*, Mr. Mulroney was quoted as saying that he was in favour of compensation to those Canadians of Japanese descent who were unfairly interned during the Second World War. In that interview he was also quoted as saying that these Canadians were arbitrarily deprived of their rights.

The very first announcement of the government made by the Honourable Jack Murta, the Minister of State for Multiculturalism, the day the cabinet was sworn in, appeared in a Canadian Press story published in the *Ottawa Citizen* on September 18 last. The minister stated that Canadians of Japanese origin would receive an apology and compensation for their internment and that a committee would be estab-

lished to—and I quote his words—"take a look and find out what we are talking about in terms of compensation."

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate now inform the Senate when the government intends to fulfil this commitment for a full apology? At the same time can he also inform the Senate what form of compensation the government is considering and when an announcement with respect to the compensation might be made so that this stain on the Canadian conscience might be finally eradicated? Finally, can he table in the Senate the names of the people who had property taken from them, the description of that property and the quantum of those claims which were never settled and are still open by the Custodian of Alien Property or his successors in title?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, my honourable friend is aware that the subject matter of his question does not come within my particular responsibilities in the cabinet. Therefore, I will take his question as notice and obtain an answer as quickly as I can.

I do not necessarily subscribe to every word in the honourable senator's introduction, since there may be some debatable points contained therein. However, he is right to say that the Minister of State for Multiculturalism has this matter under active consideration. With respect to the information he asks for about unsettled claims, that is a matter which may take more time in order to provide an answer.

TRANSPORT

RAIL TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS—REGULATIONS

Hon. Andrew Thompson: Honourable senators, I should like to ask a question of the Leader of the Government in the Senate, of which he might want to take notice. It concerns the Mississauga train derailment which took place approximately five years ago.

My question concerns whether the government, and particularly the Minister of Transport, is satisfied that the Railway Transport Committee, the railway regulating arm of the Canadian Transport Commission, has initiated adequate regulations based on the Grange report which made recommendations concerning safety measures to be taken in cases of hazardous chemical materials being transported through populated areas. Specifically, the Railway Transport Committee implemented regulations flowing from the dangerous goods legislation of 1980. It considered the speed of trains carrying dangerous chemicals, the length of those trains and the implementation of heat resistant roller bearings which are now required on 75 per cent of all trains.

I should also like to know whether the chemical manufacturers' self-regulation with respect to packaging and transportation appears to be satisfactory to the minister; and, if not, what kind of regulations would he want to see imposed.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, my colleague has raised a matter of considerable