

Adjournment Debate

Speaker, sometimes the Hon. Member makes me somewhat ashamed to be in this Chamber. He is somewhat loose with the truth where the reputations of others are concerned. I would simply point out that he said Mr. Cooper was defeated in the 1984 election. Mr. Cooper was a Member between 1979 and 1980. He has first rate credentials in the legal profession extending over at least 20 years. This attempt to paint him as something less than perfect as a political appointment is unworthy of the Hon. Member.

It is also unworthy of him, in a situation so serious and one about which this Government cares so much, to attempt to paint the Government as a do-nothing Government. In 1977, long before we became the Government, this case was brought to the attention of the Canadian people. Since the late fall of 1984, when we became the Government, we escalated concern about this matter by bringing it up directly between our Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) and his U.S. counterpart, Mr. Shultz. They have had top-level political discussions on this issue.

The Hon. Member mentioned in a denigrating fashion the Cooper commission. That legal investigation by a reputable member of the Canadian Bar was brought about by this Government for the purpose of determining whether there was any possibility of legal liability on the part of the Government of Canada.

Mr. Robinson: It was a whitewash.

Mr. Hawkes: He calls it a whitewash. He uses inflammatory language and attempts to turn a very serious human problem into political advantage for himself and his Party. He cheapens himself in the process.

This Government is still considering the possibility of financial assistance under current laws for this group of people. We have provided not only all of the information available in Canada to the plaintiffs for use in their U.S. court action, but insisted that we be allowed to turn over to the plaintiffs' counsel all the information provided to us by the U.S. government counsel. That has been done.

The Government is in touch on a regular basis with the plaintiffs and their lawyer. To try and characterize that as doing nothing is to cheapen the Member's intervention, his question, and put in doubt the sincerity of his commitment to these nine people. I think this Government has shown more commitment to the human dimension of this situation than the Hon. Member has.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.
