

Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped is contained in a document entitled "Initial Response of the Government of Canada to the Obstacles Report, December, 1981", tabled December 17, 1981.

"LETTER FROM CONCERNED CANADIANS"

Question No. 3,451—**Mr. Cossitt:**

1. Is the government aware of the communication headed "Letter from Concerned Canadians" signed by the retired RCMP officers W. F. Johnstone, J. W. Duggan, W. L. Maguire, F. Bodnaruk, P. Starek, J. E. G. Bouchard and D. B. Ingam and also signed by A.L. Bewley, a retired British Columbia provincial court judge?

2. Is the government prepared to answer the numerous allegations contained in the letter and (a) if so, on what date (b) if not, for what reason?

3. Did the letter contain the statement (a) "During the October crisis, perhaps before or after, how many lives of how many politicians targeted by the FLQ were saved? The security force of the RCMP knows. Ottawa knows." (b) "Canadians will not allow a cherished tradition to be eradicated and replaced by a civilian effort of unknown character, experience or political affiliation." and, if so, what was the government policy or reaction to the statement?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): 1. Yes.

2. No, the government is not prepared to answer the allegations contained in the letter. However, the Solicitor General did reply on December 17, 1981 and rejected the major themes identified therein. The specific questions asked relate directly or indirectly to issues now before the courts in the province of Quebec, and for that reason, the government feels it would be inappropriate to comment further.

3. Yes, the letter contained those statements. (a) The government is not in a position to say in this context what may or may not have occurred if history had taken a different course. (b) It would seem that this statement is a reference to the RCMP security service being replaced by a civilian security service. The government has indeed taken that decision. This change has been recommended now by two substantial royal commissions, more than a decade apart, which studied the question. I can assure you, however, that there was no intention on the part of the government, in taking that advice, to eradicate a cherished tradition, nor has a cherished tradition been eradicated. The presence of the RCMP throughout Canada remains and will remain after the establishment of a separate security service. I can also assure you that the government intends that the new security service will be subject to the provisions of legislation that will be brought before this House in due course.

CANADIAN WINES

Question No. 3,452—**Mr. Cossitt:**

1. With reference to the answer to question No. 3,191 which stated in part that there are "constraints of quality . . ." with regard to the serving of Canadian wines by the Department of External Affairs, what were the names of all persons connected with the department who made any judgment that the quality of Canadian wines was not sufficiently high enough for them to be used on certain occasions?

2. Is the government aware that in recent "blind" taste tests Canadian wines were selected by experts in most cases ahead of similar foreign products?

Order Paper Questions

3. Will the government embark on a program to insist that only Canadian wine and other beverages be served to all foreign service establishments as well as at Department of External Affairs functions held in Canada?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): 1. In his capacity as Honorary President of the North Atlantic Council, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, hosted in December, 1981, a dinner for foreign ministers of NATO countries. Canadian wine was served at this dinner. The Department of External Affairs regularly serves Canadian wines at luncheons, dinners and receptions for foreign guests. A wine committee, formed of senior officials from the department and other agencies, reviews this question periodically.

2. The government is aware and seeks to use Canadian products as often as possible.

3. A joint press release was recently issued by the ministers of Agriculture and External Affairs in this regard. Co-operation between the Department of External Affairs, Mr. Whelan's office and the Canadian Wine Institute will result in worthy Canadian wines being selected for use at official functions in Canadian diplomatic missions.

GOVERNMENT ANNUITIES

Question No. 3,484—**Mr. Blenkarn:**

1. Is money presently held by the government on behalf of persons who purchased government annuities and, if so, in what amount?

2. (a) Is the government paying 19.5 per cent on Canada Savings Bonds (b) does the government give annuitants the same rate of return as persons receive on the bonds and, if not, what amount of profit is the government making?

3. How many persons presently receive government annuities?

4. How many persons are presently employed in the annuities branch?

5. How many persons not now receiving annuities will eventually be entitled to receive them?

6. Will the government allow people to just cash their annuities and receive back the money deposited with the government, so that they can purchase other investments with their money instead of being tied down with the present annuity system?

7. (a) What is the total payroll of the department which handles the annuities program (b) what is the total office rent and what are the other overhead expenses associated with the persons employed in the program?

Mr. David Smith (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): I am informed by the Departments of Employment and Immigration and Finance as follows:

1. On March 31, 1981 the Canadian government annuities account in the Consolidated Revenue Fund showed that liabilities to holders of annuity contracts and certificates were evaluated at \$1,193,210,216.

2. (a) Yes.

(b) See reply to Question 730, Part 3, answered June 18, 1980.

3. As of March 31, 1981, approximately 118,500 persons received vested annuities.

4. The present number of staff within the annuities branch is 101. In addition, there are nine persons in other organizations within the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission who support activities of the branch.