

Oral Questions

by any chance because the government has given orders not to take any action?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have told the RCMP to do its job everywhere in Canada, and that is what it does. As for allegations in a newspaper article, obviously any sensible person would consider it was elementary, before stating what was written in an article—As you know, there is always a slight possibility that what a journalist writes may not be true.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister. In the same article, we are told that conversations taped by the RCMP reveal that organized crime knows very well that supplies go through an Indian reserve since, and I quote, one would have said: "We have a place there, where we know that nothing will happen".

My question to the Prime Minister is this: Will he not agree that, contrary to what he told us in this House, there are places in Canada where neither the RCMP, nor the army, nor even MPs can go freely?

• (1420)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there is no place in Canada which is outside the mandate given to the RCMP, which is to act according to the law and to uphold the law.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister tell us whether or not it is true that the RCMP has been compiling evidence for months on people involved in cocaine trafficking, and especially on an Indian chief?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, it is never wise to comment on investigations in progress or on matters related to police operations. If the hon. member wants an action leading to convictions in criminal court, he should be careful in the way he formulates his questions. I do not suppose he wants to create a situation which would prevent the police from presenting enough incriminating evidence in court.

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[English]

ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade.

The government recently signed a credit agreement worth \$60 million U.S. to help finance the construction of a new aluminium smelter in South Africa. However, Canada has also entered into an informal agreement to cut world-wide aluminium production by about 10 per cent.

Will the minister explain to the House why his government is trying to reduce the international aluminium glut on the one hand and is helping to build a new smelter on the other?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the contract in South Africa with SNC Lavalin is for the design of an aluminium smelter. It will not come on stream for a number of years, by which time the present excess amounts of stockpile in Russia should have been absorbed by the market.

[Translation]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the government thinks that some jobs are more important than others, but the aluminium glut has already forced western producers and Alcan Aluminium in Montreal to cut production by one half million tonnes.

Can the minister explain to Canadian aluminum workers who are in danger of losing their jobs because of falling aluminum prices why their taxes are helping to finance a foreign competitor?

[English]

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I thought I had just answered that question.

The situation with regard to Russia today is one of a present glut of a stockpile. The agreement among the countries involved is intended to look toward orderly marketing of that stockpile.

In the year 1996 and beyond when the South African aluminium smelter comes on stream, there should be in place a more standard, orthodox market for aluminium. We do not anticipate at that time the sort of glut that is being encountered today.

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[Translation]

BUDGET

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned that the Minister of Finance had informed the president as well as the vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Mr. Pierre Cléroux, that he would be slashing expenditures by roughly \$5 billion while increasing taxes on the middle class by \$2 billion. This announcement came on the heels of a series of meetings between the minister and this organization which is well-viewed by the Canadian public.

After having shown a lack of judgment last week with his statements on interests rates, can the Minister of Finance tell us, yes or no, whether he disclosed these details about the budget to Mr. Pierre Cléroux?