

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I wish we were completely independent, and we are to the extent that 16 or 18 months ago, I think, there was a four point difference between short term interest rates in Canada and in the United States. A few weeks ago the difference dropped to half a point, which means that our monetary policy is very independent from theirs. It remains however, Mr. Speaker, that currencies are interdependent; you only have to read the comments coming from Europe where they are complaining about the situation of the American dollar to see that pressure is made on the U.S. government and that even the German mark, the French franc and the Swiss franc themselves are completely independent of the movements of the American dollar. It is natural in the present world, because of trade between countries, and particularly for Canada, which is the country with the highest exchange rate per capita in comparison with other countries. Of course, we should be realistic and note that we have to follow world movements in this area just as in so many others.

● (1127)

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[English]

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

##### RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISTRIBUTION OF SECRET DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. I hope he has had a chance to reconsider his unacceptable and indefensible position yesterday of refusing to answer questions under the thin guise that it might affect national security, whereas the question related not to the contents of a classified document but to government policy in connection with the distribution of the document.

Therefore, I ask the Solicitor General, under whose authority did IAC—the Intelligence Advisory Committee—distribute or permit to be distributed 58 copies of the document entitled “Canadian Related Activities of the Russian Intelligence Service”?

**Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I have not revised my position.

**Mr. Jarvis:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question, and I preface it by saying it relates to no specific document of any kind. The Solicitor General is represented on the IAC by a senior official of his department, as are other ministers. Can the IAC, as a matter of government policy, distribute any classified material relating to national security without the personal approval of the Solicitor General?

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, that is a question for which I cannot provide a reply to the hon. gentleman today. I will review the procedures and advise him accordingly.

● (1132)

#### Oral Questions

#### POST OFFICE

##### SUGGESTION LEGISLATION BE AMENDED TO LEGALIZE PROPOSED RATE INCREASES

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General. On February 14 I asked him a question concerning the illegality of the contemplated postal rate increases and he promised to reply. He was new on the job at that time and was not familiar with the facts. Now that he has been in office for several weeks, and before there is a further change in postmasters general, could the hon. gentleman tell the House if he is aware of the statements of his predecessors indicating that increasing postal rates by a procedure other than amending the Post Office Act is illegal, and what action is he taking on the matter?

[Translation]

**Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Brandon-Souris should know that I answered that question at the wittily-called late show, giving the reasons why the rates were increased and explaining under what legislation we proceeded to do so. It is under section 13 of the Financial Administration Act, I believe. We also had legal opinions from the Department of Justice stating that it was quite legal and everything seemed in order. At the same time, this will allow us to reduce the present deficit of the Post Office from some \$600 million to some \$500 million. I think that it is worthwhile for taxpayers.

[English]

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the statement of his immediate predecessor, who is now Solicitor General and is an expert on legal and illegal affairs, to the effect that it would be necessary to amend the Post Office Act in order to regularize this procedure, would the hon. gentleman inform the House why we can open the Post Office Act to legalize mail opening, and not open the Post Office Act to legalize rate increases?

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Mr. Speaker, we do not have to legalize the Post Office increase. It is, as I have just said, legalized the way we are doing it. So why open the Post Office Act to legalize it?

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Mr. Speaker, is the hon. gentleman aware that some of the major users of the Post Office service are about to take the issue to court? Is he not aware, also, that this would further complicate a very confused postal situation at the present time?

**Mr. Lamontagne:** Mr. Speaker, I am aware of this group of people who wish to contest the increase. It has not been done yet. We have our own legal advisers, and we are not too worried about this action.

**Mr. Clark:** Just like the uranium cartel.