

RCMP on Friday and they will meet the Solicitor General tomorrow. I repeat we intend to enforce the law in all regions of Canada.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the acting minister of health.

It is known that any reduction in the price of cigarettes will lead to increased consumption, especially among the youth. In fact it is predicted that a 10 per cent decrease in price will result in an 8 per cent in the overall consumption, especially a 15 per cent increase among adolescents and youth.

It is also estimated that these cuts that are proposed today will result in 800,000 new smokers of which a quarter of a million will be the youth.

Is it the official position of the ministry of health to support a bill that jeopardizes the health of Canadians, especially the youth?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, obviously it is the position of the Government of Canada to help stop young people from smoking.

Smoking is a killer. It is a killer of young people and it is a killer of all Canadians.

Right now there are two million Canadians smoking smuggled cigarettes. To extrapolate the statistics of the Cancer Society, between 600,000 and one million of those Canadians smoking smuggled cigarettes can expect to die from cancer.

It is our intention to cut down on smoking by making sure that every effort is taken including the abolition of kiddie packs, including raising the age of smokers, including charging fines of up to \$50,000 for retail outlets that sell to minors.

We have an attack and a plan that is going to safeguard the health of Canadians, not a plan that will hide its head in the sand by doing nothing when two million Canadians right now are smoking smuggled cigarettes.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

The minister should know that 40,000 Canadians die each year of smoking related illnesses and that billions of dollars are already spent every year on health care problems related to smoking.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister have any idea of how much this is going to cost our already overburdened health care system?

Oral Questions

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada recognizes the fact that almost 40,000 Canadians die every year from smoking.

The Government of Canada also recognizes the fact that for the first time last year cigarette smoking in Canada increased as opposed to decreased.

The Government of Canada also recognizes the unfortunate fact that young women in particular have continued to smoke despite the general decline in smoking of the population. That is why the Government of Canada is introducing a four-pronged strategy to make sure that we have a strategy that encourages every single Canadian to stop smoking by ensuring that the base price level for cigarettes is at a level that is out of reach of young Canadians and hopefully very soon out of the wish of most Canadians.

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[Translation]

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. What the native people do not agree with are the provisions concerning the reserves which the Prime Minister implemented at the beginning of the 1970s, when he was minister of Indian Affairs, and which keep them in a state of dependence. Chief Mercredi admitted yesterday he no longer has control over the situation on the reserves.

His request for an amendment to the Indian Act which would recognize Indian self-government is fundamental but has not been answered yet.

Is it the intention of the Prime Minister to initiate, in the near future, a negotiating process with the First Nations in order to review those clauses of the Indian Act that are now obsolete?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is doing right now.

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. If he does not want the Oka situation to repeat itself, will the Prime Minister recognize that he must, in co-operation with the provinces and I insist on that point, enter very shortly into a process that will lead to the official recognition of Indian self-government?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have clearly explained our policy concerning the possibility of increasing native self-government so that the First Nations can manage their own problems on their own reserves and that is precisely the subject of discussions going on right now between