

*House of Commons*

[Translation]

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, MR. JEAN-CLAUDE PAYE

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! I would like to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of Mr. Jean-Claude Paye, Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, who is on an official visit to Canada.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

## TERRORISM

COMPLICITY OF SYRIAN GOVERNMENT

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. After a weekend of study and consultation is the Government of Canada ready to accept as conclusive the evidence from Great Britain of the complicity of the Government of Syria in terrorist activities?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition will know that I have called Canada's kAmbassador in Damascus back to Canada for consultations. I believe we have been in touch with representatives of the Hon. Member's Party and representatives of the New Democratic Party to offer them the opportunity of a briefing with the Ambassador and other officials of the Department.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE IF RECOGNITION GIVEN TO SYRIAN COMMITMENT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF TERRORIST ACTS

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister. Terrorism must be condemned, in the name of whatever causes it is claimed to have been perpetrated.

Yesterday our ambassador said on television: "I will be back in about two weeks."

Here is my question. If Canada acknowledges that Syria did commit or encourage acts of terrorism, what other steps, what other diplomatic, economic or political measures is the Government prepared to take?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** One thing is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, namely that certain elements of the Syrian Government have been directly involved in terrorist activities. What the Canadian Government wants to do is to encourage other countries to support, as we did, the action taken by the Government of Great Britain against acts of terrorism abetted by certain elements of the

Syrian Government. A meeting is scheduled for this afternoon between officials of my department and representatives of European Community countries to urge the Europeans to support the position of Great Britain.

[English]

## GOVERNMENT MEASURES

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Government has accepted the evidence given in an open court in Britain. The Government is committed to responding in positive terms against acts of terrorism. So far our Ambassador has been recalled for consultations only. Other than the heavy rhetoric of the Minister and of the Prime Minister when attending the United Nations in New York, what concrete steps is the Government of Canada really going to take?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of calling the Ambassador home for consultations is to discuss with him and others the actions which it would be appropriate and effective to take. At the moment the most important and effective thing for us to do would be to try to encourage members of the European Community to join with us in supporting the position of Great Britain against state terrorism by elements of the Syrian Government. It would also be our hope that the cumulation of these pressures will cause the Government of Syria to cause Abu Nidal to move his operation entirely out of Syria.

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● (1420)

## FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

ESTEY COMMISSION REPORT—CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANK BAIL-OUT

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. While the Canadian Commercial Bank bail-out was agreed upon in March of last year and the money paid out in April, the Government did not begin to find out what it had bought into until it appointed Mr. Hitchman at the end of June. By August 1, according to the report of the Estey Commission, "the only question which remained unanswered was how long this bank had been disguising itself as a solvent bank". Why then was the Government still sending out letters to shareholders on August 9 advising them that the bail-out had ensured the bank's viability?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear from the report of Mr. Justice Estey that there was an understanding of the problems with the bank. But we also had to be very careful as to what messages we sent out during the course of this period until we were absolutely sure of the final predicament of the bank. That status was found