

them, which could ruin their credit ratings for the rest of their lives?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, the hon. member will be aware that if a former student becomes unemployed because of conditions beyond his control, it is always possible for him to pass on that information and indicate his circumstances, and he will find that every effort will be made to accommodate his particular problem in relation to a payment schedule.

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EMERGENCY MEASURES

PLANNING FOR CIVILIAN INTERNMENT CAMPS

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General, while he is still Solicitor General. Under the emergency planning order passed in secret by the cabinet in May of 1981, the Solicitor General was given the responsibility of planning for civilian internment camps in this country. I have asked him this question in the House before. How many camps is he planning for, and what is the planned location of these camps?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, to characterize the emergency planning order as having been passed in secret is, I think, totally unjustified. It was passed in the same way any other order is passed.

Miss MacDonald: In secret.

Mr. Kaplan: It was published in the same way any other order is published. It is an attempt by the government to assign to ministers responsibility to prepare contingency plans for our country in the event of war or in the event of peacetime emergencies.

I cannot answer those specific questions, but I can assure the hon. member that as yet no work has been done in the area of making plans, and I would like very much to invite the hon. member to comment and make suggestions on whether this country wants its government to plan for emergencies of this sort and indicate whether hon. members opposite are prepared to make contributions of ideas and policies.

Mr. Lawrence: Madam Speaker, this was an order in council passed ten months ago, and it required the Solicitor General to do something. He is now telling us he has not done it. One wonders why the order in council was passed.

INQUIRY RESPECTING PROPOSED NUMBER OF INMATES

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my question is about over-all planning. What is the maximum total number of inmates for these civilian internment camps for which the minister is planning?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, the hon. member refers to the emergency planning order's having

been passed recently. I would like to remind him that this emergency order passed recently is nothing more than a renewal of an emergency planning order which was first passed in 1965 under the Conservative administration.

Mr. Crouse: No.

Mr. Hees: We were not in power then.

Mr. Kaplan: I have asked for the plans which were begun by the Conservative government when that emergency order was first put into effect. There are none. I have asked for the plans which were prepared by my hon. friend when he was the solicitor general of Canada. There are none. I can understand why there are none because very difficult questions of balancing public order and civil liberties arise, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which hopefully will become law in this country shortly, will have a tremendous bearing on any emergency planning done by the government.

I can only assure the hon. member that no such plans have been made, and I invite him to make a positive contribution to dealing with and preparing to deal with wartime emergencies which might arise in the future in this country.

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[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REFLECTIONS ON RECENT EVENTS

Madam Speaker: I hope the House will bear with me if I share with hon. members some reflections on recent events. There is no need to recall that for more than two weeks, the bells rang to call in the members, and since the House had not adjourned, the Speaker's chair had to be occupied around the clock. I want to thank all those who went beyond the call of duty, and especially my assistants who worked long hours in order to provide a minimum of services to the House.

Well-informed parliamentarians will have understood that the rules of the House had to be observed, but I am not so sure that the public understood our insistence on tradition. What ensued from our failure to bring our rules up to date earned us shrugs and even sneers from our fellow citizens. We may even have strengthened an unfortunately widespread tendency to be skeptical of the actions of Parliament, and I was very concerned about this during the past two weeks. More than once, I considered the possibility of intervening in order to end the deadlock. If common sense and logic dictated that an arbiter should be called in, that arbiter would have to be the Speaker. After all, it is the Speaker's responsibility to ensure that Parliament can function.

I admit that I was often tempted to respond to appeals, first by some hon. members, then by the press and even by the public, that I should write history and create the precedent that would resolve the situation. However, it seemed to me that