

Oral Questions

[English]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

COMMITTEE'S STUDY OF LEGISLATION

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. Last week, and again yesterday and today, the Minister attempted to ram his security Bill through the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, using closure. In view of the profound threat which this Bill poses to the fundamental civil liberties of all Canadians, allowing sweeping new intrusive powers, the targeting of law abiding Canadians, with no parliamentary oversight, why will the Minister not reconsider his position and agree—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair is concerned about a question relating to a matter currently before a committee and a proceeding before a committee. The Hon. Member knows it is not in order to ask questions in the House on a matter which is before a committee at this time. I will recognize the Hon. Member for Burnaby on a supplementary question. Can he ask a question that is in order?

An Hon. Member: No.

REQUEST FOR SERIES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, in view of the importance of the legislation in question, will the Minister agree to hold public hearings across Canada to allow those Canadian individuals and organizations that are so concerned about this massive assault on their civil liberties to be heard, rather than attempting to ram the Bill through the Justice Committee, using closure?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the question which arises is when does the time come for Parliament to make up its mind about an admittedly difficult but very important issue for the country.

An Hon. Member: It is not for you to judge.

Mr. Kaplan: The Hon. Member fails to take account of the number of briefs that have been received, the dozens of witnesses who have testified before the parliamentary Committee, the Senate Committee, the two Royal Commissions which considered the matter over a 15 year interval, and of the conclusions reached by many, many objective observers that it is time to get on with this now. The question now is how long one single Member of this House can prevent the parliamentary process from working.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP CANDIDATE

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. The

Minister will note that a couple of days ago John Turner decided to clarify his position on acid rain. He said: "I would move to the President and say, 'how about a treaty to protect our air as we protected our water?'" That is what he said. If it is that easy, what has the Minister been doing all these years? Why don't you get on with it?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the Hon. Member that we should be charitable about statements made by people who are not Members in this House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp: That is the best answer the Minister has ever given.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues just said that is the Minister's best answer ever.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER BRIEF CANDIDATE

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister is very charitable, but would he do the following for the rest of us who have been working on this issue for some time? Would the Minister offer a briefing for Mr. Turner just to explain, first, what acid rain is and, second, what some of the problems are?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, this may be only a partial answer to the Hon. Member if I tell him that I have been doing something about it as recently as yesterday on a visit to Chicago. This allowed me to put the Canadian viewpoint on acid rain to Americans, on the *America Today* show and to a conference held by the American Outdoor Writers' Association. I met last night with the Chicago League of Women Voters and I again put our position to them. I think by intensifying efforts of this kind and trying to reach the American voter, developing an alliance with Americans who see the issue the same way as we do, that eventually we will be able to convince the Washington administration of its importance.

Mr. Fraser: And what about Turner?

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POLAND—REFUSAL OF EXIT PERMITS—ETOBICOKE HUNGER STRIKE

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs. Three of my constituents are on a hunger strike in front of the Polish Consulate in Etobicoke because the Polish Government is refusing to grant exit permits for their spouses and their children to allow them to join