

Oral Questions

In law and in good conscience how can the minister continue to hide behind the bureaucracy and ignore the Adams Lake road blockade which has been in place since March 21?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been two blockades in B.C. in the last month: Upper Nicola and the one at Adams First Nations.

The blockade at Upper Nicola, as the hon. member knows, is down. The other is up. It is more sensitive than Upper Nicola because it was fish and this is an archaeological site. Artefacts have been found which the province has designated. The developer gave an undertaking that he would do an archaeological study, which he has not done. The province has sent him a letter under the B.C. heritage conservation act demanding that he do the study and cease the work. That has not been done.

Reformers said we were going to have three Okas there, which meant military force, if we did not follow their instructions. I would like to point out to the House that two men came forward at Upper Nicola. Their names were Stanley and Belleau. They went to the chiefs, talked to them with dignity, and the blockade at Upper Nicola came down. They were RCMP officers and a proud tradition did the job. Also, they were aboriginal RCMP officers and I want to commend them in the House.

• (1500)

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the blockade on Douglas Lake was taken down and I appreciate what the RCMP did there.

Adams Lake Chief Ron Jules has confirmed that the band will remove two cattle guards eliminating all vehicle access as of June 15. The RCMP have advised residents to form an evacuation plan. We are talking about private property here.

What recommendation would the minister of Indian affairs make to the Adams Lake residents regarding the evacuation plan which his continued inaction has created?

Hon. Ron Irwin (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, this is clearly provincial. I have worked well with Mr. Cashore out there.

Mr. Stinson: It is not clearly provincial.

Mr. Irwin: It is off reserve and it is clearly on provincial property. As hon. members were told last week the RCMP are under contract to the B.C. government and it is their call. If requested we will go in and facilitate.

In the Upper Nicola there was a difference. The member of the Reform Party offered to go in and help. I am hoping this member will take some lessons from his seatmate over there and will do the same thing.

* * *

BOSNIA

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

In Bosnia—Hercegovina innocent lives are being lost every day. Conditions continue to worsen for the people in Bosnia. Our soldiers are doing a magnificent job in their attempt to protect citizens. What action has the minister taken on behalf of the Canadian government to assist those who are fleeing the bloodshed in Bosnia?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the valiant efforts the member of Parliament noted on behalf of our peacekeepers, the government has seen fit to extend two special immigration programs to try to assist some of the citizens of the former Yugoslavia.

The first has been a family class program that has had its criteria relaxed so that people can be reunited with families living in Canada. As a result of that program, over 7,200 individuals have been reunited with their loved ones in Canada. The second program has been to try to focus on some of the refugee relief work in that troubled area. To date the results indicate that over 8,200 private and government sponsored refugees now call Canada their home.

These programs are working well but it is a modest response to a horrific situation. The only answer, as we all know, is for civility and peace to return to the region. We all hope and pray that it will be sooner rather than later.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention today to the presence in the gallery of two outstanding Canadians.

One is an internationally acclaimed author. She won the 1993 Governor General's Award and the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for her novel *The Stone Diaries*. Colleagues, I present to you Carol Shields.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Colleagues, the other prominent Canadian made history in 1984 when he became Canada's first man in space. He continues to be a source of inspiration to many young Canadians and will be returning to space in 1996. I present to you Dr. Marc Garneau.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.