

CANADIAN JOBS STRATEGY

ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER'S MEMORANDUM—ROLE OF CHIEF OF STAFF

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It concerns the deathbed repentance press release of earlier this morning. In part it reads:

"By the time I saw the memorandum on April 14", said Bill Musgrove, Chief of Staff to the Minister, "I judged it to be irrelevant".

Is it the policy of the Government to have chiefs of staff interfere with communications between a Minister and her Deputy? Is it not time to put the policy of government by political commissar to an abrupt end right now?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I get some 55,000 individual letters and memos each year. We have staffs in place who are there to assist us in looking at which ones are particularly necessary to come to my attention and those which can be handled by others. I have faith in my staff that they can do the job they were hired to do, and that is what Mr. Musgrove, my chief of staff, was doing at that time.

• (1140)

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am well aware that the Minister receives much correspondence. We get some of it on our desks.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

ALLEGED PARTISANSHIP IN DEPARTMENT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Here is my supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister: When is she going to put an end to the partisan patronage politics we see in her Department? Or is she just imitating her colleague, the Minister of State (Youth), and competing for the incompetence prize?

[English]

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was asked about a memorandum which had been directed to me by the Assistant Deputy Minister. I said then that I would be asking that official as to the intent of the letter. I demanded and I got an explanation from the Assistant Deputy Minister which I consider acceptable. He informed me that he intended no partisan interference, and that has been spelled out in the press release I issued today. I said in the House yesterday that I would not accept any advice if it was of a partisan nature coming from officials, and I stand by that.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gauthier: You protesteth too much.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PAY SCALES

Mr. W. R. Bud Jardine (Northumberland—Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence. Members of the Armed Forces receive a review of their pay and benefits package on an annual basis effective April 1 each year. Can the Minister advise when the announcement will be forthcoming this year, and could he confirm that when it is made it will be retroactive to April 1, 1986?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Associate Minister of National Defence): Certainly, Mr. Speaker, any pay raise when it is announced will be retroactive to April 1. Defence Department officials are currently in discussion with Treasury Board officials on the amount of increase because it is our feeling that defence employees, military people, have been lagging behind what they ought to have. We are in negotiations which I hope will be completed soon.

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CANADIAN JOBS STRATEGY

ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER'S MEMORANDUM—COMMUNITY FUTURES PROGRAM

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Does she accept the third paragraph in the press release sent out this morning, an explanation to yesterday's questions, that it is reasonable that the Associate Deputy Minister should believe it proper to speed up the implementation of the much needed Community Futures Program only if the province would agree to speedy negotiation of an entirely different program?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I mentioned yesterday that I would be discussing this matter with the Assistant Deputy Minister. Indeed, in the context in which he described it to me, I understand that there could be other interpretations put on it. He has given me his word that he did not intend any partisan interference to be drawn, and I have accepted that explanation.