

Oral Questions

The minister had ample time since the question was put to him to make the necessary inquiries. My question is as follows: Does he still maintain that medication was given to only 12 people before they were deported, while his own senior officials admit to 20 such incidents?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. It is very crucial to keep in mind that no immigration officials administer or are permitted to administer medical assistance or prescribe any medicine for those who are being removed or deported.

The only individuals who are permitted to do that, to recommend it, and to implement it are medical practitioners.

In the particular case of the woman the member raises, it was a medical practitioner and for medical reasons that administered medical attention, not immigration officials.

Second, at the time that this issue came to the fore approximately 9,000 individuals were removed from Canada last year.

I asked my officials to give me an approximate number very quickly so that I could respond to the member and the officials told me that 12 of the 9,000 individuals who were removed necessitated some medical attention on the advice and recommendation of medical practitioners and not immigration officials.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, our information differs. Considering how serious this issue is and since the minister has admitted that 12 people received such treatment, will the minister commit to holding an independent inquiry, as required under international agreements, to shed light on possibly illegal behaviour on the part of immigration officers?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, no, I am not going to have an inquiry for something that this member throws very loosely across the floor. If he has information that anyone has perpetrated illegal acts then he has the duty and the obligation as a member of Parliament to provide me with that information.

Second, under no circumstances does any medical application get administered to any individual routinely for removals. When I put in perspective the 9,000 who were removed, approximately 12 last year received some medical application. It was on the recommendation of doctors for individuals who for the most part were on medicine or had an ailment or a disease of some sort in order to take precautions during the flight.

● (1450)

In addition, the member also failed to say that a Canadian nurse accompanied the woman from Zaire in order to make sure her ailment would not aggravate the situation.

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CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the solicitor general.

Yesterday a colleague of mine asked about prisoners in federal institutions receiving various forms of social assistance and he was told that the solicitor general was looking into it.

We have looked into it and discovered that not only are the prisoners receiving OAS and CPP payments but they are receiving GST rebates even though they do not meet the qualifications of the Income Tax Act.

Will the Solicitor General act immediately to rectify this outrageous situation?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will give me the names of the people he says are receiving GST rebates I will take it up immediately with the Minister of National Revenue.

As I said yesterday with respect to the matter of elderly inmates receiving CPP and old age pensions, I am looking into that as part of my review of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to see how this can be dealt with in an appropriate way.

Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear some of that.

I would like to suggest that if it is up the opposition to supply all this valuable information to those who are supposed to be doing the job, let me know. I am up for hire. I will supply those names. I do have them and we will supply them.

I would like to ask the solicitor general to be just a little more specific and tell Canadians exactly when hard pressed Canadian taxpayers will be able to expect some relief and when prisoners will stop receiving GST payments.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have to check into the facts of the situation with the Minister of National Revenue and I will do that very promptly. I appreciate the hon. member's offer to help but I do not want to put him in a conflict of interest situation.