

Oral Questions

of the department, there was no call for that particular penalty.

Mr. Darling: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister if he would at least review the file personally at this time?

● (1432)

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, not only did I personally review the file, but my predecessor reviewed the file. We checked out the facts. One of the witnesses the employee was going to bring was to attest to his character. We said that was not in question and, therefore, that individual would not be required. The one thing I want to check out in dealing with the three members of the Board of Referees who made that decision is whether they in fact refused to allow any evidence in support: the only information I have so far is that it was information in support of his character or reputation, not having to do with the facts. I want to check that out before I come to a final conclusion.

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NATIONAL SECURITY**RECOVERY OF SECRET DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED BY GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a question of the Solicitor General. Before I put the question, I remind him that he cannot hide behind the shield of security by not saying anything in the House and then talking outside the House.

Has the Solicitor General given any direction, order or suggestion with regard to the recovery of any of the 58 documents—whether classified or alleged highly classified—or copies, or any number? If so, how many have been recovered? I ask this question in light of the fact that he is now not only intimidating members of parliament but members of the media.

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, evidently that question relates directly to the question previously asked by the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot. Therefore, the same reply is going to be provided: I am not going to comment on it.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, it is rather surprising that the Solicitor General will not answer these questions. Taking into consideration the fact that there are 58, or some other number of documents—they may be fractured, so we do not know how many are out—I ask the minister whether any charges are anticipated against any members of this House or any part of the media? Has he gone to the Attorney General of Canada to get consent to lay any charges? Has the consent been obtained with reference to any warrants issued and to proceeding with those warrants and searches of the media in this country?

Mr. Blais: As I indicated before, Mr. Speaker, the investigation is an ongoing one. The hon. member will be made aware, as will all hon. members, in the event that consent is sought from the Attorney General.

[Mr. Cullen.]

NATIONAL DEFENCE**ESTABLISHMENT OF MEDAL FOR NATO SERVICE**

Mr. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. It has been more than two years since the government, through the then minister of national defence, committed itself to establishing a medal for NATO service. When will the minister be making an announcement on that subject, for the armed forces and the people of this country?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question. The matter has been under study for a long time. It raises some complex questions. The hon. member has expressed to me his concern about this matter. I am looking into it personally, as is the Chief of Defence Staff, to perhaps find some other method of accomplishing the same purpose.

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NATIONAL SECURITY**NUMBER OF COPIES OF SECRET DOCUMENT CIRCULATED BY GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General: it relates very directly to the information sought by my colleague from Perth-Wilmot. I should point out that the government of Canada has recently been taking very extreme actions based upon the premise of a leak of security documents. There are now reports to the effect that the document in question has been circulated in large number.

Will the Solicitor General tell the House of Commons whether there is any accuracy in the reports that the document, or documents in question have been circulated in more than one copy, perhaps as many as 58 but in any event a number of copies?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the hon. member's belated interest in this matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blais: His co-operation would indeed have been appreciated last Thursday when it was sought. Under the circumstances, the hon. member's question touches on the questions of the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot and the hon. member for Calgary North. The same reply applies.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, the Solicitor General well knows that the co-operation sought from me was a request from the Prime Minister that I use my office to ask the hon. member of parliament for Leeds to come to my office, without any advice as to why he was coming, where he would be surprised by the Solicitor General of Canada and General Dare.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!