

[English]

INFORMATION

NEED FOR LEGISLATION TO GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF ACCESS

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Acting Prime Minister. In light of the sorry litany of revelations of irregularities and improprieties which we have witnessed over the last few months, and what from this side of the House, in the immortal words of the Prime Minister, appears to be a "fishy attempt to cover up", I should like to ask the hon. gentleman whether the policy of the government is still that as enunciated by the Prime Minister, that the people of Canada do not need the same protection as the people of the United States in attempts to have legislation to penetrate government secrecy?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if I can penetrate the verbiage of the hon. member's question, I should like to advise him that the government has produced, as he knows, a proposed paper on freedom of information in conformity with the open government which we are operating here.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: It is our intention to have the proposals contained in that document considered as well as the recommendations received from such hon. members as my friend, the hon. member for Peace River, who has established quite a reputation for himself in this field.

Mr. Baldwin: We will forgive the hon. gentleman quite a bit because we know what day this is and we are giving him quite a bit of latitude, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman, in connection with these long-delayed reforms for which the people and parliament have been waiting, whether the government is giving some consideration to adjusting section 41(2) of the Federal Courts Act, an act which was passed by this government about the same time as South Africa passed a similar act to permit attempts by the government to coverup through the use of a certificate? I believe Canada and South Africa are the only two countries which at the same time passed such legislation. Is it this government's intention to reform and adjust this particular act?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member is casting reflections on a government which stands in such high esteem in the mind of the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North who is president of this association. When a change is proposed to that particular section the House will be advised.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mrs. Jean E. Pigott (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. After his longwinded answer I would just like to ask if the Prime

Oral Questions

Minister is unable to attend here in the House today in his kilt because of the secrecy and non-disclosure practices of his government?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Curiosity killed the cat.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: That's an internal mystery.

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LOTTERIES

EFFECT ON FINANCING OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Jim Fleming (York West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State. The report of the National Advisory Council on voluntary action, prepared for the federal government, states that voluntary organizations are now getting less revenue than in the past and that government lotteries could be the reason. Will the minister assure the House that the government will study the possible negative effects of various government lotteries on the financial health of the voluntary community?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I did have a very useful meeting with voluntary associations a month ago, at which time this matter was brought to our attention. I shall certainly consider very carefully the representation made by the hon. member.

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MANPOWER

ALLEGED REDUCTION IN FUNDS FOR LANGUAGE TRAINING—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Could he explain why the manpower training policy review of September, 1977 for his department indicates that language training funds for immigrants will be cut back since the technical report on which the policy review is based does not provide any justification for cutting back on language training.

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, first of all the review to which the hon. member refers is specifically that of an idea put to particular provinces. Similarly, if we are able to co-operate with Quebec to the extent that we can increase Francophone immigration to that province and the immigrants are efficient in the French language then there would not be that necessity to train that many people in the other language. This is the idea and concept expressed in the review for consideration by the various provinces.