

comingue because the last time an umpire was in our area was in April 1990.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Justice, Attorney General of Canada and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Madam Speaker, I understand and sympathize with my colleague. Of course, the judges who hear these cases and Federal Court judges in general have been overloaded with work in the past year. Other cases from other areas have also been added.

I believe that the Chief Justice is aware of the hon. member's concerns. By the way, I also know that my colleague is interested in tight control on government spending. Obviously, we cannot at this time increase spending as spending on the courts must be controlled. I will ensure that the information or the question raised by the hon. member will be forwarded to the Chief Justice so that he can consider it. I do not think that the government should intervene in the day to day operations of the court, but I will ensure that my colleague's concerns are submitted to the Chief Justice for consideration.

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• (1450)

[English]

UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister answering for the minister of external affairs.

In the post cold war environment, the United Nations has played an increasingly crucial role in the world's political and economic affairs. The UN is funded by contributions from its member countries and Canada has consistently paid its assessed dues. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for our neighbour to the south.

I would like to ask the minister: What is the status of Canada's diplomatic efforts to urge the United States government to pay its badly overdue contributions to the United Nations?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member acknowledges, Canada has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that all UN members pay their dues in full and on time. Both the

Oral Questions

Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs have mentioned this issue at the United Nations and in bilateral meetings with the U.S.

Since 1990 the United States has been making annual payments both of its dues and arrears. Today its arrears are much smaller both in relative and absolute terms than they were in 1990.

We are confident the U.S. will continue to recognize the importance of paying arrears. However, we will continue to make this point with the United States and indeed with all other countries that are tardy in paying their UN fees.

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REDRESS

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, in 1984 the Prime Minister promised the Chinese, Italian, Ukrainian and German communities that he would finally settle the redress issue by negotiating in good faith.

We know that the government negotiated in good faith for the Japanese redress. The minister of multiculturalism had a mandate then.

Why has the Prime Minister denied the minister a mandate today and ordered him to impose a take it or leave it proposal on these communities? Why the double standard?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Madam Speaker, I was very proud to bring forward a series of initiatives which I thought would be very helpful in advancing an issue the Prime Minister is personally committed to doing something about.

I had a very clear understanding. We discussed it completely with members of the six communities. They have now responded in a very faithful fashion and in an articulate and clear way. We in turn are now very carefully examining what they have said to us.

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RACISM

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Madam Speaker, negotiating and having a mandate are two different things. The minister made it very clear that he did not have a mandate for this particular issue to my