

Oral Questions

● (1425)

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, the people of the entire Mohawk territory are being terrorized by a few armed offenders. The *Globe and Mail* reported today that Chief Debbie Thomas from the Akwesasne Reserve had repeatedly asked the federal government to hold an inquiry into the violent or unexplained death of 75 people since 1979, and all these facts were corroborated by the Mohawk Police Chief, Mr. Brian David.

Does the Solicitor General not agree that it is high time that the RCMP answer the call of citizens terrorized by a handful of dangerous criminals?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the crimes that the hon. member is talking about are matters coming under the Criminal Code which is enforced by the police of local jurisdiction.

In this case, as the article points out, it is the Mohawk police supported by the Ontario Provincial Police. The mounted police will be happy to give them assistance but it is the primary responsibility of the local Mohawk police and the Ontario Provincial Police.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, in view of how widespread the problem is on Mohawk territory, can the Solicitor General tell us if he has specifically instructed the RCMP to work closely with the Mohawk police to put an end to violence on these territories?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have already explained that the crimes of violence the hon. member is talking about are matters coming under the jurisdiction of the Mohawk police and the Ontario Provincial Police.

If the member had looked into the matter further he would have realized there has been a joint strike force involving the mounted police, the Ontario Provincial Police and other local police forces working in the area for several months. I wish he would recognize that before jumping to wrong conclusions from reading that newspaper article.

THE BUDGET

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Yesterday the Liberal premier of New Brunswick committed his government to a balanced budget, an achievement unheard of in federal Liberal circles.

Will the Prime Minister take a lesson from his Liberal colleague in New Brunswick and finally commit this government to achieving a balanced budget by the end of this Parliament?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that New Brunswick has had the privilege of having six years of good Liberal government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert): I think, Mr. Speaker, that was an item for debate, not an answer to the question.

The Speaker: Order. It is not that I disagree at all, but I wonder if the member would put his question.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister.

If the Prime Minister is going to achieve a balanced budget eventually, and the red book states that the government will do it in three years which will require an \$8 billion a year reduction, will we see that in the budget coming down next week?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should read the red book again. His leader referred accurately to the fact that we said we had a goal to reduce the deficit to 3 per cent of GNP at the end of the third year of our mandate. We never said a balanced budget.

If the member wanted a balanced budget, it would have been better for him to have voted for the provincial Liberal Party in Alberta in the last election.

* * *

[Translation]

WAR IN BOSNIA

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg): Mr. Speaker, we heard this morning that the ceasefire declared in Sarajevo is in big trouble. According to some sources, the Bosnian Serbs have refused to withdraw their heavy artillery aimed at the Bosnian capital.

My question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs: Can the minister tell us whether it is true that the Bosnian Serbs are refusing to withdraw their heavy artillery from around Sarajevo just a few days before the deadline set by NATO?