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Cigarette Smuggling

Question by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

THE SENATE

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JUSTICE

CIGARETTE SMUGGLING

Hon. Larry W. Campbell: Honourable senators, I shall start with the closing shot and then go on.

My question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Can the leader tell honourable senators why her government talks about solving crime and justice issues but, when it comes down to action, this government is nowhere to be seen?

It was recently reported — not by the Taliban — in documents obtained under access to information that the smuggling of black market cigarettes by criminal gangs is not a priority for the Conservative government because it may cause them political headaches with the First Nations.

This is not completely a First Nations issue. By not cracking down on cigarette smuggling, this government is allowing organized crime, in the form of biker gangs, free reign to

conduct criminal activities in this country — leading to the deaths of Canadians, contributing to public disorder and causing \$1 billion in lost cigarette revenues.

Why does this government play politics with the lives of its citizens? How can it begin to preach about its proposed tackling violent crime act when it cannot even deal with current problems, problems caused because it chose to ignore its responsibilities?

Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government and Secretary of State (Seniors)): Honourable senators, I was worried when the honourable senator said that he intended to start off with taking the parting shot. Was he not a former policeman? That concerned me somewhat.

As honourable senators know, the number one priority of this government is issues of crime and the security and safety of Canada's citizens.

With regard to the issue of cigarette smuggling and the comments made in the media the other day, I shall take that question as notice.
