

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I do not go around examining public servants all the time to make sure that they are doing their job, because they do their job.

Let me say that the decision on behalf of the Government of Memotec's purchase of Teleglobe was made after the market closed on Tuesday night. The stock exchanges were immediately informed. Up until then, there had been absolutely no decision taken. As it always does, our Department did a very fine job of ensuring that everything was kept very discretely and very securely.

[Translation]

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, if no investigation has been made, no-one can know the truth, so I should like to ask this to the Minister.

[English]

Would the Minister advise the House if she has already transmitted to the Toronto or Montreal stock exchanges a list of the names of all the people in the Government, or the Public Service, who were privy to the information that Memotec was to be recommended as the successful purchaser of Teleglobe?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I have already told the House that my Deputy Minister is meeting with stock exchange officials to assist in this investigation. She was on the plane this morning by ten o'clock. We will co-operate in every way with the stock exchanges. It is very important that this investigation be completed appropriately.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CENTRAL AMERICA—CANADIAN POLICY ON SALE OF ARMS

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Minister will know that during his absence *The Gazette* revealed that the airline company, Propair, which at that time was partially owned by the Government of Quebec, played a key role last year in a CIA linked clandestine operation to supply arms to the Contras. We have since had further evidence that a Montreal firm, Trans World Arms, has also been involved in the sale of arms ultimately reaching the Contras.

Has the Minister not made clear what the Canadian Government policy is *vis-à-vis* Central America? Do businesses and provincial Governments not know what the

government policy is? Will the Minister inform the House of his plans to ensure that they understand the policy?

Mr. Speaker: I would ask that Hon. Members ask the question once, and not over again. I would ask that Ministers give their response once, and not over again.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the policy of the Government is very clear with regard to Central America. If the alleged actions occurred, they are against the policy of the Government. Both actions are being investigated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. When the Solicitor General or I have information to convey to the House on the results of those investigations, that information will be made available in the usual way. I repeat that the actions to which reference has been made, if they occurred, are against the policy of the Government of Canada.

I also wish to say that a letter was sent this morning by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway which suggested that the Government of Canada had some knowledge with regard to one of those transactions. That insinuation made by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway is false.

CANADIAN ARMS TRADE

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): The Minister himself said in response to the Special Joint Committee's Recommendation No. 17 that "The Government has the global arms trade under constant scrutiny". Why does the Government not have the Canadian arms trade under constant scrutiny? Will the Minister provide a full public investigation of this trade?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first, we have the Canadian arms trade not only under constant scrutiny, but it is now operating under a much stricter regime concerning the export and import control legislation than was the case before. The Hon. Member will know that on several occasions I have requested her Party, which has complained about this matter, to make specific recommendations as to ways in which we might tighten that regime.

Mr. Riis: You said to refer it to the committee, Joe.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I have received nothing but silence.

Ms. Jewett: You are avoiding the whole issue.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Because the New Democratic Party does not want to contribute—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.