

Adjournment Debate

Before deciding what action to take, the Security Council is awaiting a reply from the African countries to the Secretary-General's request for assistance. Canada's eventual contribution will be considered in light of the Security Council's decision.

The Security Council is apparently leaning toward a regional solution with OAU participation funded by the United Nations. The RPF and representatives of the government have travelled to Tanzania to negotiate a ceasefire but are not talking to one another. However, they talk separately to the Tanzanian facilitator.

The Department of Foreign Affairs received the Rwandan ambassador earlier this week to encourage his government to negotiate in good faith and end the killing once and for all. A similar message has been transmitted to the RPF via his representative in New York. Politicians of both sides were told that Canada will have a long memory toward those who exert responsibilities and do not use their power to put an end to these massacres.

The Canadian Forces Hercules operating out of Nairobi into Kigali was shot at this morning after landing in Kigali. There were no injuries and damage was superficial. Flying has temporarily ceased until the situation at the airport has stabilized.

I thank the hon. member for Rosedale for bringing this crisis to the attention of Canada's Parliament. I also want to congratulate him on the excellent work he is doing in the whole area of foreign affairs.

[Translation]

FLU VACCINE

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides): Madam Speaker, last April 26, I questioned the Minister of Public Works and Government Services about the purchase of flu vaccine. His answer reflected his decision on that issue. However, everything was not said about the purchase of that vaccine. There are still some questions left concerning the role of the minister as buy broker for 4 million units of vaccine for the benefit of the provinces and territories. I would like to state a few disturbing and somewhat troubling facts about the process which led to the federal government's decision on that issue.

In 1993, the contract for the supply of the flu vaccine was awarded entirely to Bio Vac. The call for tenders for 1994 was issued on December 8, 1993. The tender closing date was January 7, 1994 at 2 p.m.

Two bids were received; Bio Vac from Laval was offering the vaccine at \$1.70 per unit and Connaught from Toronto was offering a made in the U.S.A. vaccine at \$1.46 per unit.

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Connaught's bid being lower, the federal minister who bought the vaccine seemed to prefer its American vaccine. That is when dumping allegations were made to the effect that Connaught was selling this very vaccine for close to \$3 in the United States, but charging us \$1.46 for it. Faced with this dumping issue the minister extended the bidding period from January 7 to 18. At that time, we were well aware the government was hesitant and delaying its decision. We knew the situation was rather tricky considering that jobs were at stake, as well as a large investment in biotechnology, proposed by Bio Vac in Laval.

Another extension was announced, from January 18 to February 3. All this time, the Minister was under pressure to rapidly award the contract to BioVac. In a letter dated January 27, the Quebec Minister of Industry, Commerce and Technology asked Minister Dingwall to decide quickly in favour of BioVac.

On March 25, the minister told the House that he was looking for a Canadian solution to a serious Canadian problem. On April 20, the minister announced that he had decided to split the difference and that his Canadian solution was to buy two million American vaccines. The minister, as a Canadian broker, was responsible for the lay-off of 26 employees with his Canadian solution, jeopardising at the same time a \$32 million investment in biotechnology in Laval.

This unacceptable decision raises some questions. What explanation can the minister give for the fact that his negotiations increased the average cost of the vaccine from \$1.58 to \$1.77, causing an additional expense of more than \$750,000 to taxpayers?

Second, given that the minister will now pay \$1.77 per dose, why did he refuse, on January 7, 1994, at the close of the first call for tenders, to award the full contract to BioVac at \$1.70 per dose?

Third, can the minister tell us why, as a Canadian broker, he buys American vaccines at a cost of \$1.69 per dose while BioVac's initial bid was \$1.70? How can he explain such a cheeseparing saving of 1 cent on two million doses of vaccine, or \$20,000, compared to 26 jobs lost? Has the minister analyzed the economic cost of these 26 job losses? Finally, why is he buying vaccines made in the U.S.A. when they could be entirely produced in Canada? The minister's Canadian solution is a bad joke.

To add a final touch to this already gloomy picture, rumour has it that the minister asked BioVac to sign a letter stating its satisfaction with the deal. What unmitigated nerve on the part of the minister!

The federal broker-minister is not transparent in this case. He acted in such a way that he penalized a Canadian firm and disregarded the taxpayers' interests. His decision is senseless and thoughtless. We ask the minister to disclose all the facts and to table, if he has the courage to, all documents pertaining to this case.