

INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, has the Secretary of State for External Affairs transmitted, in a formal note or in some kind of message to the U.S. government, the position of this government; and was that position made as clear and as strong as the note which was sent previously by the former secretary of state for external affairs?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that the discussions have gone on at the verbal level, and it has not been in the form of a note.

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[Translation]

COMMUNICATIONS

INQUIRY WHETHER TELEGLOBE WILL BE SOLD TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications. I should like to know if it is true that Teleglobe has been struck off the list of Crown corporations to be privatized only to be put on an alleged second list?

[English]

Hon. David MacDonald (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will know, during the process of the review of Crown corporations a number of them are being examined with respect to a more appropriate activity in the private sector. That is still the case in respect of this particular corporation.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sauvé: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

I find this answer totally unacceptable, in view of the rumours circulating about the possible purchase or sale of Teleglobe. The minister knows that the Canadian Telecommunications Carriers Association consider themselves as privileged purchasers. Therefore, to obstruct or encourage the efforts of the association, it is important that the minister make a decision or say clearly whether Teleglobe will be sold to private enterprise. The minister will understand my question when I remind him that the whole matter of competition in telecommunications remains, even if the CRTC has made a ruling on the systems interconnection. That decision emphasizes the urgency for the government to announce its policy about the amount of competition that is to be allowed. So the minister can see how this relates to the sale of Teleglobe—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I do not think the hon. member, who knows this corporation particularly well, would want me to anticipate the outcome of any particular study. I think she knows the importance of this corporation serving a number of telecommunications interests on behalf of the people of Canada. When the study has been concluded and there are decisions to be announced, they will be announced in the usual way.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES—CANADIAN STAFF OVERSEAS

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, I address my question to the Prime Minister because I believe many members of the House are concerned, not only about the immediate problems facing us in Iran but about the religious and political problems that are inflaming the entire area.

I am concerned about two things, and perhaps the right hon. Prime Minister could comment on this. First of all, what is being done by Canada to protect these staffs, particularly the non-important personnel and people who are Canadians in these countries, such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and, for that matter, also Afghanistan where there are some problems? Also, what is being done in the way of emergency preparations for airlifting minority groups, such as the Baha'is, who have already been massacred in some numbers, and people of other groups such as various religious minorities in other areas? What is the Canadian government prepared to do to make it possible for these people to come to Canada or to find help?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can reply in part to the hon. member's question. He or others in the House may wish to direct supplementary questions to the Secretary of State for External Affairs who has been handling this matter. In Pakistan, the Canadian ambassador has taken all the Canadian staff into his residence as a precautionary measure. We are given to understand that in Pakistan and in Saudi Arabia, Canadian citizens are at this time under no threat.

Mr. de Corneille: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering about the care and concern for minority groups whose members are bound to be and are, in fact, refugees at the present time or potential refugees, such as the Baha'i faith people in Iran and others who might be persecuted.

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to mention two matters. One is with regard to the situation in Iran and in Pakistan, countries which the hon. member mentioned at the outset where there might be concern for Canadian personnel.