

● (1450)

Mr. Mazankowski: The Hon. Member should stop frustrating attempts for people in Alberta to maintain jobs and job security. That is precisely what he is doing on the floor of the House of Commons right now.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES—SALE OF ARMS TO IRAN—ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE INVESTIGATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I believe many Canadians were distressed to learn of the attack on the Canadian food project in Nicaragua by the Contras. We appreciate the Minister's willingness to take that matter up with the U.S. Secretary of State.

I would like to draw to the attention of the Minister testimony that was given before the special committee investigating the Iran-Contra affair in the United States. This evidence indicated that the first shipment of arms to the Contras was purchased through a Canadian arms dealer. The committee has further released a memorandum from Colonel North to Robert McFarlane which discusses a Canadian originated arms sale to the Contras.

Taking into account those facts, I would ask the Secretary of State if he could report whether the RCMP has completed its investigations undertaken into Canadian participation in sales to the Contras and whether these recent revelations will also be incorporated into that investigation so that we will be able to determine if in fact Canadian arms are being used by the Contras to kill and maim innocent civilians in Nicaragua.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am informed by my colleague, the Solicitor General, that the investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is not yet complete and that the Solicitor General has requested that the elements referred to by the Hon. Member, and perhaps other elements, should become part of the investigation.

REGULATIONS GOVERNING ARMS EXPORTS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for the answer and I would hope that either he or the Solicitor General would give us the date that report is expected.

I would like to ask the Secretary of State a further question. Considering the ease with which Canadian arms dealers use intermediary countries to trans-ship arms to countries containing groups like the Contras, which is very clearly in violation of government policy, the government policy which we respect, I would ask the Minister if it is not time the Government looked at ways of tightening those regulations and

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rules to ensure that Canadian arms exports are not used in areas where there are hostilities, civil wars or conflicts, and particularly not in cases where there are severe violations of human rights as in the Nicaraguan case. Would it be possible to have that kind of recommendation or reform made and perhaps considered by the External Affairs Committee?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member may be making some assumptions with regard to the nature of the Canadian involvement that the RCMP investigation will not bear out. He raises a difficult and complex question.

If the Hon. Member can propose some terms of reference that might allow us to get at this problem in a tangible way, I would be very interested in looking at them. It is highly complex because it deals only incidentally with arms trade and has to do with general and often normal practices of international commerce. However, if there is some way that we could define a way to look at that particular problem, I would be interested in seeing whether it would be worth while taking further action.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

PROPOSED SEARCH OF EMPLOYEES' BELONGINGS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the post office. I am sure the Minister is aware of the plan of Canada Post to have security guards search the personal belongings of employees as they arrive at work, for stolen drugs, alcohol and items like that. I wonder if he would remind the post office of the Marin Commission report which recommended that people only be searched when there are reasonable and probable grounds and that the post office should be taking preventive action in the area of security.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, of course this decision that was taken by the post office has nothing to do with me or the Government but—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: It is a Crown corporation but those Hon. Members would not understand that.

The Hon. Member may be aware that here in Ottawa, six individuals in the post office were charged with selling drugs. A death occurred as a result of a worker who was under the influence of alcohol while driving a forklift off a loading dock. The recommendation at that time was that the post office take responsibility and ensure that that does not happen again. Taking security measures means looking at things like lunch pails to make sure that alcohol is not being brought onto the work site to ensure that those kinds of accidents do not happen