

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Of course, Mr. Speaker, the government and all members of this House share the member's sense of grief and sympathy. We extend to the families of the two unfortunate victims our condolences in these tragic circumstances.

We are aware of the high level of tension and anxiety of the residents who have left their community and are temporarily housed in Cornwall at the government training institute.

Our officials have been on site continuously from the time that evacuation occurred last weekend and senior officials of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development are providing assistance and counsel where required.

We are remaining in contact with the elected and traditional leadership of the community of Akwesasne.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister. Perhaps I could turn to the Solicitor General and ask him a question in relation to what was asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition a few moments ago.

Can he provide us with some information now as to whether or not his department and U.S. authorities are utilizing a co-ordinated effort, not just to parole the reserve but to remove the unauthorized, illegal heavy weaponry that is on the Akwesasne reserve such as machine guns, rifles, hand grenades and all those other unacceptable objects which are there and which are obviously killing people?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated a little earlier, the effort that was made was a co-ordinated effort by all police forces to go on Akwesasne in order to ensure peace and order, and obviously the application of the respective laws.

[Translation]

Mr. John F. Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. We are glad to hear that the Quebec Police Force is in St. Regis, on the Akwesasne reserve, and that order has been restored on the reserve for the time being.

Mr. Speaker, my question is the following: Can the government assure the House and the residents of the

reserve that the police will remain on the reserve as long as their services are required by the authorities of the reserve?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Obviously, Mr. Speaker, that is the same question in French as the one that was asked in English a few minutes ago. As I said a few minutes ago, and as I said yesterday, we were seeking joint action by all the police forces concerned, and it is as a result of joint action that the police forces went to the Akwesasne reserve to restore law and order. Of course, this concerted effort will continue.

[English]

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, there have been persistent reports over some period of time which suggest an involvement of U.S. organized crime with the gambling facilities and casinos operated by the Warrior Society on the reserve.

Can the minister tell the House whether the RCMP has confirmed or is in a position to confirm those reports and that it is that involvement which is the long-term cause of the violence that is happening on the reserve?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, considering that the operation of the activities to which my hon. colleague is referring are occurring in United States territory, I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. He referred to a meeting which is to take place tomorrow involving the various government authorities. The long-term solution here, as he indicated, would ultimately go to the local leadership of the reserve.

Will the national native leadership and the elected native leadership from the reserve be invited to participate at the beginning of this process of seeking a long-term solution and, in particular, will they be invited to the meeting tomorrow?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the hon. member for Victoria and other members of the House that the wishes of the elected and traditional leadership have been taken into account and respected throughout the piece now for many weeks prior to the unfortunate events of the last couple of days.