

## DRUGS

### EXCESSIVE PAYMENTS BY PROVINCES TO COMPANIES

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Madam Speaker, it has now been confirmed by provincial Government spokesmen that provincial Governments and drug companies have arrangements which have resulted in the Provinces having paid out over \$50 million in each of the last three years to the drug companies in excess of that which is necessary for the procurement of drugs for those who have received benefits through the drug programs of the Provinces. This has happened in each of the Provinces, with the exception of British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

I would like to suggest, Madam Speaker, that provincial Governments be more careful in the way they enter into those arrangements. We cannot afford to have this kind of over-expenditure take place continuously. In particular, we cannot afford to have it continue knowing that the Governments are fully aware that the expenditures are unnecessary. I would ask that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin), in any future negotiations with the various Provinces, keep this matter in mind, and attempt to negotiate a more satisfactory arrangement in order that we do not waste the dollars of the taxpayers of Canada.

● (1115)

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### INVASION OF GRENADA—SAFETY OF CANADIAN CITIZENS— AIRLIFT ARRANGEMENTS

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to one of the Ministers of State dealing with external relations. Would the appropriate Minister explain to the House what the current situation is with respect to the Canadians who are still stranded on the island of Grenada, around whom there is now grave danger and whose lives may be in jeopardy?

Would the Minister indicate to the House why, 16 days after the overthrow of Prime Minister Bishop and ten days after this matter was first raised in the House, the Government has been so totally inept that it cannot arrange an airlift that is a shorter flight than from here to Toronto, about 35 to 40 minutes? What, in truth, is wrong?

**Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)):** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member covers a broad period of time with his series of questions. I will try to deal with them very briefly.

First, for a period of the time covered by the Hon. Member's question there was no desire expressed on the part of Canadians to leave the island. Then there was a period of time

### Oral Questions

when the airport was closed during the chaos and it was not possible to do so. Canadian officials went into the island and contacted our nationals, and for those who indicated they wished to leave, arrangements were being made last weekend. At that time permission was received from the Grenadian authorities for Canadian aircraft or another aircraft to carry out the Canadians. Charter arrangements were made for a 48-seat aircraft to do that. That would have happened last Monday if there had not been last minute interventions by some of the countries that owned the airline which, in the confusion of the time, believed that they did not want their aircraft going into Grenada.

When that was straightened out by Prime Minister Charles of Dominica with her helpful intervention, it was too late into the day on Monday for the flight and the rescue attempt to take place. The invasion intervened, making it impossible to take place on the following morning, and American military authorities, who have been in charge of the airport since that time, have not been able to facilitate the combination of a time when the Canadian Hercules would be allowed to land and a time when it would be safe to escort the Canadians to the airport.

My position is that I want every opportunity for the Canadians to be removed as long as that can be done safely. But I have very firmly said that I do not want any attempt to bring the Canadians to the airport if that cannot be done safely, and if their lives would be endangered in doing so.

After consultation with the Americans during last night, we arranged that the Hercules went in this morning and landed at 7.10 to drop off two Canadian officials, Mr. Michael Daniel and Mr. David Brisco, whose task it is today and tomorrow, if necessary, to find and contact the Canadians who are on the island, who wish to leave, and attempt to have them brought safely to the airport.

I can say further that most of the group who had been at the Ross Point Inn have dispersed to other locations, making it more difficult. I am not aware of the premise of the Hon. Member that any of the Canadians are in any danger. The state of military operations on the island is such that there is little danger unless one seeks to move on the open highway. That is the situation. It is a matter of sniper activity from settled areas on high ground. We are in the position—

**Madam Speaker:** Order. The Hon. Minister might have another chance to answer other questions.

#### NOTIFICATION OF CANADIAN CITIZENS

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Would he indicate to the House why the Government did not simply alert the Canadians that the Hercules aircraft was landing this morning and that, if they would be available at the airport, they could be brought back to Barbados? Second, now that he has referred to the sniper fire in which Canadians