

Government Orders

that it was confidential information. We could never find out which countries were on it.

I expect that the member for Victoria, our critic, will be very interested in the hon. member's motion in committee. I would guess, although I cannot prejudge it for him, that there is a strong likelihood he would support that amendment.

I am not clear—perhaps I did not listen carefully enough, although I did listen—as to whether the member would support the bill, if so amended.

I want to ask the member, since he is a person of legal standing, what he thinks about what has often been referred to as the Nuremberg trials, and the resulting principles.

I remember as a student hearing about them at that time. The allied powers put on trial officials of the Nazi government and officers of the Nazi armed forces, including guards and commanders at concentration camps, death camps and so on, for things they had done, which in civilian life would certainly have been considered crimes, such as murder or kidnapping and deportation.

They were called crimes against humanity. The defence that many, if not all of those officers used, civilian or military, was: "I was acting under orders. The decision was not mine. I was obligated as an officer of the forces or as an official of the government to carry out those orders. I am not responsible for anything that was wrong in what I did".

The decision as I understand it, the basic principle used at the Nuremberg trials, was that every person is responsible for what he does. If my government orders me to do something that I consider fundamentally morally wrong, then I must not do it.

In the light of that, I would like to ask the hon. member whether he supports the sale of these arms, even to a list of countries created with the restrictions that he has in mind.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, as I stated we have a funny feeling that this bill will pass despite our opposition. If this bill passes and is sent to committee, we will be proposing amendments which would more or less—I cannot spell out the exact amendments now—restrict the sale of such weapons to countries with which we have

collective security arrangements for defensive purposes and for peacekeeping.

We would forbid the sale to countries that are in a state of conflict internally or internationally, or where there is a strong possibility that they could be involved in such conflicts.

We would also propose another amendment whereby the government would be obliged to submit the list of countries to a parliamentary committee. Any new countries to be added to the list would be submitted to a parliamentary committee for the scrutiny and approval of that committee.

• (1610)

There are two kinds of amendments.

If the government was to accept those amendments—by the way those amendments would bring our law pretty much in line with what the Swedes have and what we have declared to be policy—I would agree to the legislation, because it would mean that we would be restricted to selling these kinds of weapons to countries with which we have collective security arrangements for collective defence, not for offensive purposes but collective defence, and for peacekeeping.

I am very strongly in favour of disarmament. I mentioned that. I said a policy on the arms trade must go hand in hand with a disarmament policy. I hope the day will come when we can reduce our arms on all sides and armies will not be necessary. We will probably still need peacekeeping forces.

To be honest with the hon. member, if the government was to accept the sorts of amendments we have in mind—and we have not drafted them in their final form—then I would agree to the bill. For several years I was a member of a cabinet which sold certain arms to friendly countries for defensive purposes, I did not object to that. I did not resign from cabinet. However, I do object that weapons of these kinds are sold to countries that are in a state of conflict or about to be in conflict, or that use the weapons to deny the human rights of their own citizens or crush their own citizens.

It is that sort of thing I think is intolerable and I could not accept.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak briefly. In that light I certainly would like the minister to have the