

*Adjournment Debate*

It is time that we looked out for these Canadians, as well as other Canadians who are in other jails and who are experiencing similar problems. We have a chance and an opportunity to act on their behalf and we ought to do so.

**Mr. Jim Edwards (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to my hon. friend from Moncton. As he correctly said the Prime Minister did give a very complete answer to this question yesterday. I do not think the Prime Minister would have committed himself to do something that he knew he could not do.

It cannot be assumed that if Canada were to ask for the expulsion of Christine Lamont and David Spencer it would be granted automatically. While the Brazilian president has the discretionary authority to grant expulsion, it has been emphasized to us that there is a clear distinction between the authority, as set out in the Brazilian constitution, and the practice by which that authority is exercised.

We have been told that in practice expulsion would not be granted while appeals are under way or before the convicted prisoner has served his or her sentence. We have also been told that the Brazilian government would not agree to expulsion in these circumstances because it would amount to unwarranted interference by the executive branch of government in the affairs of the judiciary and would discriminate against the other defendants who would not be released or expelled.

The case of the Chilean who was recently expelled from Brazil bears no resemblance to this case. There was no court procedure under way in Brazil in his case, nor was he even in custody. The Chilean authorities wanted him in order to provide information on individuals for whose disappearance during the Pinochet regime he is alleged to have been responsible. This is essentially an extradition case and was handled by expulsion because it is a more rapid procedure.

On many occasions the Secretary of State for External Affairs has expressed concern over the severity of the sentences received by Ms. Lamont and Mr. Spencer. These sentences and the convictions themselves are being appealed in the Brazilian courts. The Canadian embassy in Brasilia has been working actively to ensure that both the appeal of the convictions and the appeal of the sentences move forward as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, the appeal of the sentences received a set-back on November 30 when the judge ruled that an essential document was missing from the appeal documents, but this ruling was immediately appealed by the lawyers representing Ms. Lamont and Mr. Spencer. The embassy will continue to do everything possible to ensure that the appeal process keeps moving expeditiously.

The embassy's efforts to hasten the ratification of the Transfer of Offenders Treaty between Canada and Brazil, which was signed last July 15, have also been achieving some success. The treaty was approved by the foreign relations committee of the Chamber of Deputies yesterday and we are told that it will be forwarded to the justice committee today.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm that the consulate general in Sao Paulo is doing everything possible to ensure the safety and welfare of Ms. Lamont and Mr. Spencer. Last week when the consulate general learned that Ms. Lamont was suffering from swelling of the ankles it immediately dispatched a Canadian doctor to examine her. After consultations with the prison doctor who had examined her previously and with Ms. Lamont's lawyers arrangements for blood tests at a private facility were made. The consulate general provided sterile syringes for the blood test. It will continue to monitor the situation closely and provide all possible assistance.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday I rose in the House to ask the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Agriculture a question with respect to the Crow benefit.

Western Canadian farmers are at a disadvantage in western Canada because they are hundreds of miles from port. In fact, in some cases they are over 1,000 miles from port and have to ship their grain long distances to those ports. The Crow benefit, and before it the Crow rate, has been instrumental in the grain transportation system as we know it in Canada.