

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

the army they had heard that a raid was expected at one of the city's armouries, and in response to this warning the army intensified its security guard at both Minto and McGregor armouries. One is left bewildered by such a set of circumstances. The obvious question is: How was it that in such a situation Minto armouries proved vulnerable, and how many other national defence installations across the country are similarly vulnerable?

Here are the facts, taken from Winnipeg newspapers—the *Tribune* and the *Free Press*. Internal security was checked and a mobile radio patrol was alerted to watch Minto and McGregor armouries. It appeared that the thieves knew in advance where to look for the weapons. They scaled a wire fence and sawed through two bars of a sub-ground basement window. Inside, they sawed through a steel screen mesh in an opening above the door to the quartermaster's store where the guns were kept.

● (10:20 p.m.)

Lately, in the process of investigation, it has been reported that there were no army guards on duty at Minto armoury on October 30 when the theft took place. Personnel on the grounds that night, as reported by the Winnipeg *Free Press* of November 8, consisted of civilians only, two caretakers and a fireman.

My question to the government, sir, is: How could this situation have occurred in the light of an advance warning by the police that they expected such a raid, and what does this hold for our Department of National Defence installations right across the country?

**Mr. D. S. Macdonald (Parliament Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, before the house wonders if there has been a re-assignment of functions I should say on behalf of the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Cadieux) that tonight's inclement weather has prevented him from being here and accordingly I have been asked to represent him. There is really not

much that I can add to the information which has already been given to the hon. member for Winnipeg South (Mr. Sherman) by my colleague the Solicitor General (Mr. Pennell) on November 3.

I am informed that the Winnipeg city police have this matter under active investigation, and the military and the R.C.M.P. are giving them every assistance and co-operation. I am also advised by the departmental officials concerned—and the hon. member has confirmed this in his own remarks, describing the elaborate security precautions that were taken in a physical way to protect the equipment—that the precautions which were applied to the Minto armouries were considered adequate.

I am sure the hon. member will agree that no security system is perfect, and none could be perfect where these weapons have to be in continuous and frequent use. I am informed that this is the first loss of weapons through theft from an armoury in over two years. I would agree that it has been an unfortunate incident, but I have every confidence that the police authorities will apprehend these criminals.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, might I congratulate the hon. member for Winnipeg South on his very fine address earlier this evening, which was refreshing—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Victoria, B.C.

VETERANS AFFAIRS—MAINTENANCE OF  
PREFERENCE IN DEFENCE ESTAB-  
LISHMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. D. W. Groos (Victoria (B.C.)):** Mr. Speaker, anxious as I am to get an answer to the question I posed to one of the ministers yesterday, I must ask if you would mind deferring the question until tomorrow because the weather has prevented the spokesman for the department from being present tonight.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.25 p.m.