

Oral Questions

Last night, after the tragic deaths of two young Mohawk men near Snye, Quebec, the police forces of the United States and Canada finally entered the Akwesasne Reserve where they are now on patrol.

Does the Solicitor General have a firm commitment from the federal government of the United States, the government of the State of New York, the two provincial governments, and from his own government that the police forces will remain on patrol on the Akwesasne Reserve until law and order is restored on a truly permanent basis?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member indicated, and as all hon. members in the House know, last night there was a co-ordinated effort by all police forces involved to enter Akwesasne in order to ensure peace and order, and also to continue the investigation by the *Sûreté du Québec* and the New York police force of the two homicides.

As I indicated yesterday, we were looking for a co-ordinated effort. A co-ordinated effort took place, and a co-ordinated effort will continue to take place.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think there is still a question in the minds of many people as to why this effort on the part of the police forces did not take place until after the tragic deaths in question. However, I want to move on to another point.

We have all seen on television the extent of military type weaponry in circulation on the reserve. Will the Solicitor General tell us what is being done to eliminate this type of weaponry from the reserve? Surely there is no place for weapons of this nature in a free, peaceful and democratic community.

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if my hon. colleague is referring to military equipment, I indicated in a statement earlier today that I have asked the military for some equipment and engineering support. That has been provided at my request.

With respect to other armament to which the hon. member may also be referring, the police forces, as I have indicated, are on the reserve as police officers and obviously will be administering the laws of Canada and the laws of the various provinces.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there is no place for a machine gun, for example, in a peaceful community. Since the Akwesasne reserve is located on American as well as Canadian territory, and part of the Canadian territory is in Quebec and part in Ontario, what is the government doing in this emergency to find a long-term solution whereby all the people of Akwesasne could live in peace and dignity and really unafraid?

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker as my colleague the Solicitor General has reported, the short-term objective of the joint action last evening was to secure peace and order and to restore a sense of calm to the Akwesasne community on both sides of the border and in both provinces.

As part of the search for a long-term and permanent solution to the problem, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is leading a meeting of the five jurisdictions tomorrow morning in Montreal. This is part of ongoing discussions which have occurred among those jurisdictions in some form for several months now.

This is in particular to search for a lasting and democratically achieved solution acceptable to, and with the guidance of, the Mohawk leadership within the communities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, let me first offer my condolences as local member of Parliament to the family of Wilbur Edwards, the second victim of the sorry violence in Akwesasne.

I would like to ask the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development whether he can assure this House that help will continue to be given to the Mohawk families who have now sought refuge in Cornwall, Ontario, and that this assistance will continue until they can return home in safety, without fear of further attacks?