

Oral Questions

gentleman would be the first to agree that we cannot provide a degree of security which would turn these embassies into armed camps. Even if we did that, logic also compels one to the conclusion that, regardless of the degree, it could be breached. If it were breached, the conclusion must be that it was not adequate.

I reiterate that the Turkish Embassy, speaking on behalf of its Government, expressed satisfaction. The use of the term "happy" is that of the hon. gentleman, not mine.

MEASURES TAKEN IN WASHINGTON

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, there are some Governments around the world which have responded appropriately to the seriousness of the situation when it comes to certain terrorist groups within the Armenian community taking violent action against the Turks. The Pinkerton guards who have been provided to the embassies have very limited training. They are given a revolver, and then told explicitly not to use it in terms of protecting embassy personnel. Does the Minister consider that adequate to meet the needs of the Turkish Embassy, particularly during the past few weeks?

In the last two years the Americans have added, to the Turkish Embassy in Washington, two armed guards who are not Pinkerton employees but members of the U.S. security service force who are trained to protect embassy personnel, using weapons if necessary. Is that not a more effective kind of protection which could deter terrorist activities?

● (1430)

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, without in any way accepting the preamble to the hon. gentleman's question, I am aware, as is the Government, of the criticisms with respect to the use of Pinkerton security guards. That is one of the several matters that are under very active consideration at this moment. We are considering whether that system should be retained, improved upon, or indeed whether some other system should be put in place to meet our security obligations with respect to our embassies.

RCMP REPORT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, would the Minister confirm that the report which was prepared by the RCMP and submitted to the Government last summer said that the previous Government awarded the contract to Pinkerton simply because it was the lowest bidder, and that that is an inadequate basis for providing protection? In fact, in the report they recommended that the RCMP be involved in providing that protection. Would the Minister confirm that that recommendation was in the report?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): No, Mr. Speaker. The hon. gentleman was here and was listening to the questions of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, and to the questions of the former

Solicitor General. Yet he puts the same question again, which elicits my same response that it would be inimical and would prejudice the security of the Embassy to reveal, in a public way, any details with respect to security arrangements at the Embassy. As I did yesterday, I will again today offer to meet with the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the New Democratic Party, as Privy Councillors, knowing that they have an oath in place in this regard, to discuss with them and to obtain their ideas on the security arrangements with respect to our embassies.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to make the mistake of going to the Deputy Prime Minister on this subject. I will turn to the Solicitor General and ask very directly whether all the security measures which were recommended in the report were, or were not, implemented. Yes or no. We want no details. Were they implemented, yes or no? The Deputy Prime Minister seems to think we want details. He is anxious to get up, but my question is directed to the Solicitor General.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, we all know the purpose of the hon. gentleman asking that question. I have answered it with respect to questions put to me by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition, and with respect to questions put to me by the former Solicitor General. I have now answered it with respect to questions put to me by the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Could we hear from the Minister responsible?

Mr. Nielsen: It is not the intention of the Government—and I am speaking on behalf of the Government—to make public, or discuss publicly, any details of any report with respect to the security arrangements at that Embassy. It would not serve the public interest to affirm, or otherwise, whether any, some, or all of the recommendations in that report have been implemented.

Mr. Johnston: I agree that the purpose of the question is clear, Mr. Speaker, but so is the purpose of the response.

REPORT INQUIRY

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to the Solicitor General for a moment, if he has the courage to answer this question, which I think is very straightforward. Obviously, if all the measures in the security report were implemented, the report itself was defective in view of the incident of yesterday. The real issue is whether or not they were implemented, or whether everyone should go back to the drawing board and produce another security report on the security of embassies in Ottawa.