

and we should accept them for the good functioning of our institutions having more competition.

As I said, this is a publicly traded, widely owned, well capitalized institution that has given us all the guarantees we need to proceed with the licence.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, my question is to the Minister of Indian Affairs and it concerns a very serious and even tragic matter.

As the minister will know, the proud people of the Mohawk community of Akwesasne in my riding are virtually hostages in their own community as a result of disputes between pro and anti-gambling natives on the U.S. side of this reserve.

Since the community straddles the Canada-U.S. border, has the minister contacted or will he contact the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. James Baker, and ask for his immediate assistance so that both Washington and Albany can get involved and take their responsibility in this very important issue.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell for a very seriously motivated question about a series of incidents which led to a very unfortunate conflict on Monday and Tuesday of this week in the Akwesasne Mohawk community.

There have been extensive discussions among government officials, federally and provincially, over the past day or more with a view to calming and restoring order in the community of Akwesasne, particularly the St. Regis community on the Canadian side of the border.

As part of that effort, ministers have been involved and contacts have been made with the solicitors general of Quebec and Ontario and important international initiatives have also been taken.

Our embassy in Washington this morning approached the United States State Department to underline the Canadian government's concern about the escalating violence on the reserve, to express concern about the

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effectiveness of policing action on the U.S. part of the reserve in order to curb that violence, and our officials made it clear that this issue requires the full co-operation of law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border.

The State Department, in turn, assured Canada that they were aware of the seriousness of the situation and have initiated contacts with the New York State Governor's office and the Bureau of Indian Affairs with a view to taking action. The State Department concluded by indicating that they would be in contact with our embassy as soon as possible to report on specific further actions to be taken by U.S. enforcement agencies on their side of the border.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's response. Unfortunately, yesterday Major Robert Leu of the New York State Police is quoted as having said that his police would not intervene for the following reason: "We are viewing it as an internal matter".

I am sure that I speak for both my colleague for Beauharnois—Salaberry and myself when I say that this kind of reaction on the part of U.S. authorities is most inappropriate when the lives of both American and Canadian citizens are at stake.

• (1440)

Given that 2,000 people are landlocked in St. Regis, 26 cars have been burned, the cultural centre was burned, four and a half hours of gunfire took place the night before last, and today I have just learned from speaking to the chief that one person is reported missing, will the minister again ensure that not only the authorities in Washington co-operate but that we get specific action from Albany, particularly in the area of the State Troopers?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the hon. member and all members of this House would want to know that we also have initiated actions on the Canadian side. I have already answered the question regarding representation to the U.S. State Department, state authorities and officials and we expect a response from them very, very shortly.

As well, I personally met with Chief Mike Mitchell, Grand Chief of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and