

*Oral Questions***NICARAGUA**

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of State for External Affairs. Three years ago I raised in this House of Commons actually four times, the question of arms sales by Canadian companies to the Nicaragua contras.

Yesterday *The Toronto Star* reports that arms dealer Arif Durrani has seen the shipments first-hand, and is testifying that documents were falsified.

In light of the new, direct evidence of illegal activity of Canadian companies, will the minister make public the RCMP report, which I do not believe has ever been made public, and can we expect charges against these companies in Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct. He raised the matter four times and I think that on each occasion I gave him the assurance that the Canadian government was not involved in and had no knowledge of a transaction to supply arms.

He quotes Mr. Arif Durrani. He does not give his full credential. He is a convicted arms dealer in prison in Oregon. He is the source of the latest round of concerns that have been expressed in *The Toronto Star*.

The hon. member knows as well as anyone in the House that there is a practical rule against releasing RCMP reports. I trust him and I take him as a man of his word. If he is prepared to accept the normal confidentialities that would apply, I will be sure that there is a complete briefing given to him on a confidential basis as to the circumstances. Then he can base his questions on the facts, not on allegations that come from persons occupying cells in Oregon.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): I did neglect to mention that. That is a very good source though, and the minister should consider that.

I say to the minister that I will not take up his offer. He should make the report public to the Canadian people, as they have done in the United States with respect to the Iranian-*contra* affair.

My supplementary question is to the Prime Minister. Either the Canadian government in this matter was ignorant of what was going on, were wilfully blind or, in fact, knew what was going on.

Given that this happened in a period when he was very close to the American President, Mr. Reagan, and to the White House, was he ever asked by President Reagan, Mr. Poindexter, or any other officials in the White House at that time, and did he agree, to secretly ship arms to the Nicaraguan contras through Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, but they did tell me to keep my eye out for subversive socialists in Canada.

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[Translation]

LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. As part of our unemployment insurance reform and our Labour Force Development Strategy, we plan to spend several million dollars on helping older workers and supporting the development of communities hit by high unemployment rates. For instance, \$100 million was earmarked for the Program for Older Worker Adjustment and \$50 million for the Community Futures Program.

Mr. Speaker, we have been waiting four months for the Senate to act, and meanwhile the unemployed, workers and disadvantaged regions are being penalized. Does the minister have any indication whether the Senate will finally come to its senses and stop using the unemployed and the regions for its own political ends?

An hon. member: Good question.

An hon. member: Very good question.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, are aware of the problems of the unemployed and more specifically of unemployed older workers, and we have the solutions to these problems in our Labour Force Development Strategy. For the sake of all older workers and others who are unemployed, I sincerely hope the Senate will decide to support a bill that is of vital importance to all Canadian workers.