

Oral Questions

not have had the 707 in place earlier to remove these Canadians and ensure their safety?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, if the Hon. Member's memory goes back as far as yesterday, he will know that his Leader and others were referring to the state of great confusion on the island in those preceding days. We encountered difficulties in obtaining clearance for an aircraft to go in, but we did obtain it eventually from the Grenadian authorities late on Sunday. As the Hon. Member knows, if he was in the House yesterday, we at that time had available an aircraft of a local airline, but there were difficulties in obtaining the necessary permission from all of the islands which participate in the ownership of that airline.

● (1420)

If the invasion had not intervened, our 707 aircraft would have attempted to go in yesterday morning. If one were to look at the situation in relation to the nationals of other countries, I think that one would find that Canada reacted in a very thorough manner in relation to the protection of our nationals and, during those days of confusion, managed to remain in contact with them.

As to their present safety, we have been in contact with all Canadian nationals known to be on the island, although we have not had contact since late yesterday with five of them who are in the town of St. George's. We have no reason to believe that they are in any danger.

Mr. Stevens: Madam Speaker, in the explanation given by the Minister of State for the failure to remove Canadians, he overlooked the fact that he was certainly warned about it by this side. My Leader and my colleagues made 18 separate interventions expressing our concern for the safety of the Canadians and asking about the position of the Canadian Government on this matter, all prior to Monday night.

CANADIAN POSITION ON INVASION

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Madam Speaker, would the Minister now indicate if he is finally in the process of sending a note to Washington stating Canada's position with respect to the entry of the Caribbean nations and the United States onto the island of Grenada? Second, if he has that note available, would he now table it?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member refers to a note. What I specifically did was I called the American ambassador. As I indicated earlier, His Excellency met with me earlier this afternoon. At that time I outlined in detail a number of Canada's concerns in relation to the military intervention in Grenada, and also in relation to the question of the evacuation of Canadian personnel.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON INVASION

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the same Minister. The Minister is reported to have said yesterday that he believes the invasion of the island of Grenada is, in his mind, comparable to, or the same as, the invasion of the Falkland Islands. Could the Minister please tell the House whether that is in fact true, and how he could possibly in any way compare those two events?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, I regret that the Hon. Member may want to twist around my words on a matter of such importance in the international sphere, for political reasons.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan: What I said yesterday, and what I would repeat gladly, is that it does appear to me that military intervention into another country should only be taken, if at all, after the widest possible consultation among the other countries involved because of the danger of subjective values leading to a wrongful conclusion as to the degree of justification involved. I used as an example military interventions such as those which occurred by Argentina into the Falkland Islands, and in various other parts of the world in the last few years, albeit of a different character, or of different degrees of justification in our eyes. Nevertheless, the very fact of military intervention into sovereign nations carries with it the danger of increasing world tension, and is a movement toward the possibility of war.

GOVERNMENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF SITUATION

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, since the Minister refuses to say that there are differences between the two, I would ask him the following question. In the view of the Canadian Government, how much would a government in the Caribbean have to be deposed; how much of the intervention would have to be sponsored by other nations; how much trouble would Canadians have to be in before the Government of Canada would face the fact that there is a difference between the deposition of a parliamentary government, the intervention in that country by Argentina, and the shooting of the leaders of a country, to take over and operate a régime that appears in international terms to have desperate consequences for the people of that country? When will we in Canada understand the difference?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, what we have said in relation to the invasion of Grenada is that we do not have available to us the grounds that would seem to justify that action. I would only say to the Hon. Member, as we have said already, that there may well be good justification that the United States has not disclosed as yet. But the Hon. Member is indeed dealing with a tricky area when he says that internal turmoil will be, in itself, sufficient justification for other countries unilaterally,