

Oral Questions

criminal acts charges under the Criminal Code and now the dangerous sex offenders charge under the amended code. In light of that fact, these prisoners continue to be released on what we call mandatory parole, I am asking the Minister of Justice this question in all seriousness, because I brought to his attention last year a murder in Calgary where the accused was released and now we have a situation in Ontario which is creating a great deal of anxiety.

Mr. Basford: I appreciate that, but the problem is that when people have served a fixed sentence, they are subject to release from the penitentiary. That is the reason the Criminal Code was amended last session and the dangerous offenders section was included to deal with those with an indeterminate sentence under which a person cannot be released if deemed to be a dangerous offender without the approval of the administration and of the courts.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

DEPLOYMENT OF NEUTRON BOMB—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. On July 15 of this year, in answer to a question about the deployment of the neutron bomb, the Prime Minister said that he had not been consulted and the Minister of National Defence said that all he knew was what he had read in the newspapers. Since the minister has just attended a nuclear planning group meeting in Bari, Italy, can he tell the House what policy he advanced on Canada's behalf concerning the deployment of the neutron bomb?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the hon. member. I was not present at the meeting in Bari. We are rotating members of the planning group and we were not present this time, although we are kept informed on what goes on there. The first thing to do is to realize that the term "neutron bomb" is a misnomer. Actually it is not a bomb and it is not a strategic weapon. It is known in NATO circles as an enhanced radiation warhead.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Danson: It has a reduced blast. We are not dealing with very nice things, Mr. Speaker, but these are part of the arsenal of modern nations today. The neutron bomb, as my hon. friend calls it, the enhanced radiation warhead, is not in production. It has not been decided by the President of the United States that it would go into production as yet. In his considerations he has decided to consult his NATO allies. Some discussions are taking place or have taken place, as I understand it, at the NPG meeting in Bari, but there is not a unified position on it at this time and no decision has been made, but all the allies will be consulted on this matter. There is no question about its

[Mr. Woolliams.]

effectiveness as a military weapon but the considerations go quite beyond that.

Mr. McKinnon: The nomenclature used by the minister is rather surprising. People in some circles might think that this use of the word would fit better the minister of housing, which was the previous portfolio of this minister, in that the bomb is designed to protect houses and kill people. The serious thing about it is that if deployed it might well lower the nuclear threshold in western Europe and make the likelihood of a nuclear war breaking out more serious than it is at present. Is he telling us that Canada has no position on whether we are for or against the deployment of the neutron bomb or, as he prefers to call it, the enhanced radiation warhead?

Mr. Danson: It is not, Mr. Speaker, that there is no position. The whole question is being studied at this time by us and our allies. Obviously one of the considerations would be the reduction of the nuclear threshold. There are counter arguments to that and we want to hear them all before we go running off shooting advanced radiation warheads from the hip.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs in light of the general question of the nuclear disarmament. As you are probably aware, Mr. Speaker, the minister is about to depart on another extended tour, and yet we have not had an in-depth report from him on the last of a series of meetings in London, England of the nuclear supplier group. My question to the minister is whether it will be possible for us to have an in-depth report from the minister on this important subject before he leaves?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Not before my departure, Mr. Speaker. I should say to the hon. member that, through nobody's fault, and I think hon. members opposite will agree, a statement had been prepared the summer before we adjourned and could not be presented nor could a debate take place. Within the next two weeks some significant developments are to occur, including those at the INFCEP meetings in Washington with regard to restrictions on reprocessing and the like. Probably, it would be appropriate to await the outcome of these, and I will undertake to the hon. member and to the House to have a full statement as early in November as possible when we get the details. In the meantime, if the hon. member wishes to have some form of briefing, I will be glad to arrange it for him while I am away.