

Oral Questions

America. As a Member from Quebec I cannot accept attacks against this group of francophones.

Mr. Speaker, the statement of the former Liberal Minister is insulting and, made as it was in the absence of the accused, comes from a petty coward.

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[English]

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

COMPANION OF THE ORDER OF CANADA—THE HONOURABLE
JOSEPH ROBERTS SMALLWOOD

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise and pay tribute today to a great Canadian, the little fellow from Gambo, Joseph Roberts Smallwood, otherwise known across the country as Joey, who is today receiving our country's highest honour, Companion of the Order of Canada. Due to his ill health, he is receiving it in St. John's from the Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. James McGrath.

Journalist, broadcaster, labour organizer, farmer, politician, statesman, and the only living Father of Confederation—without him we would not be a province of this country today. His legacy of bringing Newfoundland into Confederation and bringing the advancements to our province which we have seen over 23 years with him as Premier are adequate testimonial to him.

However, I want to pay tribute to him today. I am sure the House would want to join me in expressing that. We in Newfoundland are proud to be Canadians. There is no one prouder today than Joey Smallwood. I am sure Members on both sides would want to join me in offering our congratulations and best wishes to him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for his statement. I think all Hon. Members would want to know that, on behalf of the House, I have arranged to send best wishes to Joey Smallwood today. I know that will meet with the approval of all Hon. Members on this occasion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SALE OF UNITED STATES ARMS TO IRAN—REPORTED
INVOLVEMENT OF CANADIANS

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. It was reported that

yesterday William J. Casey, Director of the CIA, told the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives that Canadians were involved in the secret deal to provide arms to Iran. Therefore, will the Deputy Prime Minister tell the House what he, any other Minister, or any official of the Government knows about any such Canadian connection to this matter and when he or they first learned of it?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, this information was reported in the press based on closed testimony before a congressional committee. Therefore, there are no published facts on which to proceed. We are actively seeking to determine from U.S. officials any facts concerning the involvement of Canadians in any arms transaction. We will pursue this further as information becomes available.

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that my question was answered by the Minister for International Trade. Surely this is something about which the Government should know since any Canadian involvement in the matter of sending arms to Iran could involve breaches of Canadian law or policy.

I want the Government to confirm that it is carrying out an immediate and full investigation involving the RCMP and the Security Service to ensure that the Canadian people and Government know all the facts about this strange Canadian connection to the Irangate affair. Can we have this assurance?

• (1420)

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that this issue is being thoroughly investigated. Should it appear that Canadian laws have been broken by Canadian citizens, appropriate legal action will, of course, be taken.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR REFERRAL TO EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMITTEE

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, is the Government prepared to give immediate approval to referring the question of the Canadian connection in arms shipments to Iran to our Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, so that public hearings can be held forthwith and the Canadian public informed of all the facts of this question?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister for International Trade pointed out, this is testimony which was taken in camera. There are allegations of certain things. The Government of Canada is trying to determine all the facts. As soon as those facts are determined we will certainly indicate to the House in the fullest fashion possible. However, at this point in time the details are clearly not available and a