

Government Orders

new bill, the Canadian government would be permitted to distribute in this instance this particular vehicle with a gun on its turret—whether it would be for peacekeeping or for its potential use in a war zone situation—to any country. The government has not put any restrictions in this bill as I understand it.

Could the minister please enlighten me as to how the government would control which countries would be allowed to get access to these vehicles from Canada? Is there going to be any kind of control? Is there going to be any list of criteria? Will the human rights criteria which we have supported so ardently and feel so strongly about be a fundamental criterion?

• (1250)

If it were, where would you put Saudi Arabia in that regard? I do not think Amnesty International has given Saudi Arabia a very fine grade or mark. I could understand our distributing or giving access to the Netherlands, as a NATO partner, or to be a participant in the forces that would be the new forces in Europe. However, I certainly do not see how we can have no restrictions, no accountability and no yardstick of measure in the distribution of any kind of war games and war toys.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the controls come in two stages and I will be very careful in outlining them here.

If these amendments are adopted today, it is quite right, as the hon. member asked, to say: "Well what controls will apply to the export and import of automatic weapons?" It is a reasonable question and it is a responsible question.

The controls will be applied in two stages. First of all, a defence, research, development and production agreement will have to exist between Canada and the country of final destination. That country will have to be included on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List maintained under the Export and Import Permits Act. If an arrangement does not already exist, let us say a country

wants to be a customer and we do not have an arrangement, one would have to be negotiated and the proposal to add the country to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List would have to be approved by cabinet through an Order in Council. The Canadian government will closely control proposals to establish arrangements with countries.

Let us say we are uncomfortable with a country that applies. These are some examples of where we will closely control any proposals to establish arrangements: first, countries which pose a threat to us or our allies; second, countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities; third, countries under United Nations Security Council sanctions; fourth, countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population.

Export of automatic weapons would be permitted only to a government with which Canada concludes the necessary arrangement or to a consignee authorized by the government.

Applications to export automatic weapons will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the same licensing procedures applied to all exports of military goods from Canada.

As we all know, these include an end use statement, supporting documentation and so on. This, frankly, is a bureaucrat's delight. There are a great many transparencies in the act. It will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

I think that will deal with the hon. member's very responsible question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock.

The House took recess at 12.53 p.m.