

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NICARAGUA—REPORTED PURCHASE OF ARMS FOR CONTRAS BY MONTREAL FIRM

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Would he please tell the House what date the Government found out that a Canadian company, Trans World Arms of Montreal, with connections in Miami, acted as an arms broker and bought arms in Portugal which were shipped under forged Guatemalan documents to the Nicaraguan contras?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP began an investigation in January shortly after the appearance of information and allegations in a Montreal newspaper. The Hon. Member, as well as conveying some false insinuations by letter, has conveyed some information which we have passed on to the RCMP and it will constitute a part of their investigation.

REQUEST THAT MATTER BE RAISED WITH PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, the Minister will find in the information I have sent him that the same kind of forged documents used by Trans World have also been traced to Stanford Technologies, the firm of Richard Secord and Albert Hakim who were involved with Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver North. We raised the Propair matter and now the Trans World matter. Is the Minister prepared to go to the Portuguese authorities to get them to provide the Canadian Government with all the files relating to the shipment of arms through Trans World Arms, allegedly to Guatemala but really to the contras?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, let me try to make this as clear as I can. Any Canadian companies shipping arms to those destinations do so contrary to Canadian policy. Whether or not they do so contrary to Canadian law is a matter which will be determined by an RCMP investigation. There is now an active RCMP investigation. If it is consistent with that investigation for me to make the kind of inquiries requested by the Hon. Member, then I shall.

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THE ADMINISTRATION

DRUMMONDVILLE CONTRACT—SIZE OF TENDERS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Public Works and concerns the Drummondville Public Works contract. Two days ago the Minister said in the House that the Brodilaf group submitted the lowest tender. He has now been corrected twice, once by his Chief of Staff and again this

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morning by the Deputy Minister who admitted that the other bid was cheaper. Will the Minister now admit he was wrong and the staff recommendation in favour of the Hama group was changed, either by the Minister or by Treasury Board, in favour of someone else? Will he not admit that only a public inquiry could clear the air in this whole matter?

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, this is probably the fifth time the Hon. Member has put that question to me. I have clearly indicated that the tender by the Brodilaf group for rental was the lowest of the two competing bids. I then said, and I repeat, there were other considerations. I made available the 3,000-page file this morning to my learned friend for his scrutiny. I have indicated that I will make that file available to the press. The decision was made on the recommendation of the public servants at head office and approved by Treasury Board. It is the best bargain in the situation.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION WHY HAMA COMPANY DID NOT OBTAIN CONTRACT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): This morning, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Minister of Public Works told us that when the first tenders were called two of the three bidders were withdrawn, leaving only the Hama Company. In the second tender call Hama submitted the lowest bid.

Considering the fact that the Hama Company won twice, Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister explain that the contract was awarded to somebody else?

[English]

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, while I think two or three different words were used, the question is the same and the answer is the same.

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APARTHEID

SOUTH AFRICA—ADVERTISEMENTS PROMOTING TOURS FROM CANADA

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. What will be the Government's response to the reappearance of newspaper advertisements inviting Canadians to South Africa for brainwashing sessions, in violation of the voluntary sanctions against travel to South Africa?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I regret those advertisements. I regret that some newspaper publishers are prepared to put profit ahead of principle. They are, nonetheless, within the law and we do not intend to change the law in that regard.