

Adjournment Motion

are other countries such as Great Britain producing very serviceable armoured cars and tanks.

I return to the main questions: what are we doing with these vehicles, what are they to replace, what is their use if we do buy them, and are we to assume that there is no preference to be given to the other nations in NATO?

I hope that the parliamentary secretary will be able to answer these questions because I am asking him for information, not to embarrass the department or the minister. I think there is quite an expression of interest in defence in Canada, and this needless and pointless secrecy only serves to confuse what may be a reasonable replacement program. I am sure that the Canadian people are now prepared to accept the fact that we do need replacements desperately, and particularly for our armoured vehicles.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as part of its re-equipment program the Department of National Defence has a requirement for an armoured wheeled personnel carrier, commonly known as an armoured car. This type of vehicle is being manufactured in a number of countries, including Brazil, France, Switzerland, Germany and the United States.

During the past summer, a technical procurement team from the Department of National Defence and the Department of Supply and Services examined ten different types of vehicles available on the international market. These government representatives visited the U.S.A., Brazil, France, Germany and Switzerland to examine at first hand vehicles being developed or in production.

Companies which had armoured cars which met the basic requirements of the Department of National Defence were asked to submit technical and financial proposals. Six proposals were received.

Following an intensive assessment by the government team, which considered such factors as technical performance, potential industrial stimulation and program price, three vehicles were selected which met the basic criteria. These are the Commando from the U.S.A., the Piranha from Switzerland and the Urutu from Brazil.

The technical assessment in progress last summer for an armoured wheeled vehicle was the normal preliminary step in examination of equipment needs which the Department of National Defence carries out. Models of all three vehicles are now undergoing winter trials at Camp Wainwright, Alberta, to determine their performance under cold weather conditions. These trials commenced earlier in February and will not be completed until the latter part of March of this year. The trials themselves are being conducted by soldiers from the Calgary based No. 1 Combat group under the supervision of factory representatives and specialists from National Defence headquarters.

Following completion of these trials and further detailed studies concerning technical performance, potential industrial stimulation and price, recommendation will be made to the government by the Department of National Defence seeking approval to begin negotiations to purchase the vehicle.

[Mr. McKinnon.]

AIR CANADA—ATTEMPTED DENIAL OF RIGHT OF MEMBER TO APPEAR BEFORE LABOUR BOARD—REFUSAL TO PAY EMPLOYEES APPEARING AS WITNESSES

Mr. Ian Watson (Laprairie): Madam Speaker, what I intend to discuss now relates to the incident in Montreal on December 4 before the Labour Relations Board when an Air Canada representative made representations to that board asking it, in effect, to rule that citizens appearing before the board should not contact their member of parliament, or members of parliament or ministers concerning matters which were before the board.

I think every member of the House readily agrees that that kind of request was ridiculous. Apparently Air Canada indicated to the minister that it had not authorized its representative to make that kind of representation. What is important about this instance is that it reflects the kind of attitude adopted by the labour relations division of Air Canada in the Montreal region; presumably this attitude exists outside the Montreal region as well. Nevertheless it reflects the attitude of Air Canada management to labour relations in general, and to its employees in particular.

This episode, so far as I am concerned, began in the latter part of 1973, when I was informed by several people working for Air Canada, who are constituents of mine, that the Air Canada labour relations division at Dorval was contributing to a serious deterioration in labour-management relations by the handling of the case of Mr. M. J. Morrison, chief shop steward at the power plant shop. Mr. Morrison was forced to work overtime on Dominion Day, 1973, even though it is a statutory holiday and is, by act of parliament, a public holiday. He had also been required to work on St. Jean Baptiste day, 1973, because Air Canada decided that that day would also be a normal working day.

After working five hours on Dominion Day, 1973, from 7.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., Mr. M. J. Morrison went home tired, leaving work three hours early. Mr. Morrison was 58 years old at the time and had worked 13 days without a break, and he was tired. But he was also angered by the callousness of Air Canada in misusing the power it has under the collective agreement to call in employees for essential work on holidays. It so happened that the so-called essential work that Mr. Morrison was called in to do could easily have been left until the next day. The call in for work on Dominion Day was purely and simply a show of power exercise by the company officials responsible. In any event, Mr. Morrison was suspended by Air Canada for five days, with a loss of pay privileges and a letter on his file, for being three hours absent without permission.

On January 15, 1974, I wrote to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) giving him the details of the incident and informing him of what I regard as an unsatisfactory labour relations situation at the Air Canada power plant at Dorval.

[Translation]

In that letter I wrote to the minister, I advised him that Air Canada was annoyed that Mr. Morrison had said in the past that the company had not observed public holidays and had asked its workers to put in too much overtime. According to Mr. Morrison's report on overtime, the company wanted the mechanics to exceed the overtime agreed