

Oral Questions

HUMAN RIGHTS

IRAN—PERSECUTION OF BAHAI FAITH

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I associate this statement with my colleague, the Hon. Member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro). There has been much talk recently, in the media and in legislatures across the land, about the Holocaust and the attempted extermination of a race more than 40 years ago. Everyone keeps saying that such a human tragedy must never happen again. However, a 1980s' version of the holocaust is happening again. The Government of Iran is determined to wipe out that country's largest religious minority, the Baha'is. The hateful Ayatollah Khomeini régime is quietly, but systematically, executing hundreds of people every year. The most recent death camp exercise has claimed at least 200 lives.

This continuing horror story was graphically brought to the doorstep of my constituency office in Dundas, Ontario, a few days ago. A delegation from the Baha'i Assembly of Dundas included a lovely young lady, Dr. Feri Jabbari, who had just lost her distinguished father before an Iranian firing squad. The Baha'i delegation's message was twofold: first, to bring about greater public awareness of the campaign of terror being visited upon Iran's largest religious minority, and second, to thank the Parliament of Canada for being among the first of the world's democratic nations to pass a unanimous resolution expressing alarm at what is happening to the Baha'is in Iran.

I only wish, Mr. Speaker, that the international community could do more than just pass formal resolutions about the persecution of the Baha'is. Another holocaust is in the making, and no one seems able or willing to stop it.

* * *

RAILWAYS

ALLOCATION OF RAIL CAR ORDERS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, the announcement made by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) earlier this week with regard to the allocation of the rail car orders was most heartless and did not even begin to recognize the unemployment which has almost become structural in National Steel Car. There has been hardly anyone working there over the course of the last year. There is a sufficient amount of work which needs to be done and which could be done by those employees and by the employees of the other plants across the country. There is the necessity to repair the existing rolling stock, work which is not currently being undertaken, and should be undertaken.

The Minister on many occasions has expressed his concern for rail safety. This would be an ideal time both to meet his commitment to rail safety and to provide much needed employment in many centres in every part of the country.

• (1115)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

CORPORATE AFFAIRS

RAID ON MONTREAL SHIPPING OFFICES

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, it is alleged in the newspapers that yesterday officials of the Anti-Combines Investigation Branch raided the offices of Canadian National Shipping in Montreal, together with the offices of CAST North America Container Lines, and Sofati Container Lines. My question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs asks whether in fact these raids by his officials, as alleged, did in fact take place and, if so, can the Minister indicate if the underlying cause for this investigation is the reason behind the long, long delay in the public inquiry with respect to the relationship between Canadian National Railways and CAST North America Container Lines?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, although I can confirm that an inquiry is under way, I cannot confirm who has been investigated. Normally, under current practice, we do not confirm or deny that a combines investigation is taking place except when those who are the subject of the activity go to the press and make it public. Then it is the people concerned who are making it public and it is difficult to deny it.

I agree that an investigation is taking place, but I want to warn the Hon. Member not to draw any conclusions. Because a particular company's premises have been searched does not necessarily mean that this company is under suspicion.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the caution issued, to me, but where price cutting is going on in the North Atlantic and a major Crown corporation in this country is involved, I think we have some responsibility to pursue the matter.

EFFECT ON COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Transport, who will be fully aware that twice in recent days the Standing Committee on Transport has had to delay or postpone hearings with respect to the annual reports of Canadian National Railways and Air Canada. I would ask the Minister whether or not, in his judgment I suppose, the actions which took place yesterday in Montreal will preclude the Standing Committee on Transport from pursuing its investigation of Canadian National's annual report and the relationship between Canadian National Railways and CAST North America?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to quarrel with the Hon.