

*Oral Questions*

lift the arms embargo, and other countries have said the same thing.

France and Great Britain, which have the largest numbers of troops participating with us in the peacekeeping mission in the former Yugoslavia, have expressed the same opinion. But, for the moment, we think that this embargo can be maintained and that there can be effective controls to ensure that the United Nations mission is not threatened.

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[English]

**GUN CONTROL**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend the justice minister again expressed his desire for the universal registration of firearms in Canada.

Will the minister acknowledge that since the introduction of the universal registration of hand guns in the country, the criminal misuse of hand guns has actually increased? Will he acknowledge this irony?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yes, but if I may say so, I do not believe that response leads logically to the conclusion there is not a good case for registering all firearms in Canada.

May I point out that the increased use of hand guns for criminal purposes in recent years has for the most part first, been in urban centres, and second, been because of smuggled illegal hand guns.

The proposal we will bring forward will deal, among other things, with preventing illegal firearms from coming into Canada. We will never do it perfectly but we can improve what we are doing.

Second and very briefly on the subject of registering long guns, it should be borne in mind that in rural areas the fatality rate for firearms is higher than in urban areas and primarily derives from the use of long guns, not hand guns.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the justice minister makes our case. The emphasis should be on controlling smuggling and that type of thing.

Professor Gary Mauser of Simon Fraser University has released a report estimating that universal firearms registration in Canada will cost a minimum of half a billion dollars and could be as high as a billion dollars.

Given the failure of present registration programs to stem crime and the disastrous fiscal situation of the country, how can the minister justify even considering this major new spending initiative?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, should the government commit itself to a universal registration system, the second thing I will do after announcing it in the House would be to mail to that person at Simon Fraser a copy of the analysis we have of cost.

We would never undertake a registration system that cost anything like those amounts of money.

• (1455)

In any event, if the government decides on a registration system it will be because our fundamental purpose is to enhance public safety in the country.

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**GRAIN TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask about a number of contradictions which surround the government's position on grain transportation subsidies.

The Minister for International Trade says that the Crow benefit should go and the sooner the better. The Minister of Transport says he wants his department to cut the subsidy and last week his deputy minister said: "As far as the Crow is concerned, the government has to move in some other direction". Even the minister of agriculture acknowledged that cuts must be made but he keeps giving the public signals that he is the defender of the Crow in cabinet.

My question for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is this. Is he defending the Crow benefit from attack? Is he prepared today to clear the air and let prairie farmers know that it is the federal government's intention to keep grain moving by rail by ensuring that the Crow benefit remains—

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of agriculture.

**Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I dealt with that subject at some length in a speech I delivered last week at the annual convention of the United Grain Growers in Calgary. In order to save time, I will be happy to send the hon. member a copy of my speech.

I will tell him what is happening at the present time. As the Minister of Transport and I committed some months ago, we are presently engaged in a final round of discussions with farmers and farm organizations about future reform measures affecting the WGTA. Indeed, later today I will have the opportunity to discuss that subject with the prairie ministers of agriculture. Over the course of the next couple of months the Minister of Transport and I will be canvassing all of the major farm organizations in the country.

Our objective is to finalize the government's position with respect to the WGTA so that we might present recommendations to our cabinet colleagues early in the new year.