

IMMIGRATION

REFUSAL OF ENTRY PERMITS TO KNOWN TERRORISTS—
AUTHORITY FOR PERMIT TO SHAFIK AL-HOUT

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and relates to his answer to the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe, to

the effect that we will not allow known terrorists to enter Canada. Can the minister indicate under whose auspices a minister's permit was granted to Shafik Al-Hout and if security checks indicate he is not a known terrorist or member of a group promoting international terrorism?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—and this was repeated by the President of the Privy Council—that the policy has been long established and most recently repeated as to how such ministers' permits are granted. The PLO is considered a prohibited organization, but members of the PLO who are not themselves known terrorists are not denied ministers' permits. They require them, and they are granted when the person concerned is invited by a reputable Canadian organization and if the visit is to be for a short, specific period. The person in question was examined under these criteria. As reports indicated that he, himself, was not a known terrorist, he was permitted entry for a specific period, and the purposes of entry were known.

CONSULTATION WITH UNITED STATES ON BORDER SECURITY
ARRANGEMENTS

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Olympic Games, I should like to put a supplementary to the Solicitor General.

In view of the most recent decision of the American Treasury to reduce quite substantially, if I am not mistaken, the funds appropriated for customs stations along the Canada-US border and traffic control between our two countries, can the minister assure the House that the security of the 1976 Games will in no way be affected? And can he indicate if, since that statement was made, there have been any discussions in this regard with his U.S. and Quebec counterparts?

[English]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, the story which appeared in the press has not yet been confirmed by American authorities. The RCMP will be in touch with them about this, but in any case we intend to have as effective a security on our part as is necessary to combat any terrorist activities at the Olympics.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE--ALLEGED
SURVEILLANCE OF CERTAIN CANADIANS OF ARAB DESCENT--
REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, on October 30 when I asked the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) about the surveillance of Canadians of Arab descent it was against a background of great concern about the inequity, if not iniquity, in having decent Canadian citizens smeared.

The outrageous and harmful article in the *Globe and Mail* on October 27 is but one of the efforts to malign the record and impugn the motives of one group of Canadians,

namely, those who came themselves, or whose ancestors came from the Arab countries. The article itself was sufficiently disturbing, but the contradictory statements following it muddled the waters further. After discovering who Mr. Toupin was, the Solicitor General declared that the Arabs were not under surveillance, while security director Toupin was quoted in the same news item as saying they were. I am glad the minister reiterated his own view when he answered my question. Yet there is far from sufficient reassurance on this matter.

Four days after my question a young Canadian of Arab descent gave information on the CBC to the effect that he is being questioned by the RCMP. This young man, Ismail Munder of Winnipeg, declared that he was being interrogated about the PLO, the Montreal Olympics, and the Arab community. Mr. Munder claimed that he was being treated as a potential subversive. These are the young man's words. He is, I am sure, only one of many Canadians in this category. Therefore I am less than satisfied with what is going on. For many months I have heard of Canadians of Arab descent being watched, interrogated, and generally made to feel like second class citizens.

• (2200)

A good government in a good democracy must be ever zealous of the rights of the citizens and concerned lest the individual be made to suffer because of his membership in any linguistic, ethnic or social group.

Canadians of Arab descent, like all other Canadians have the right to be considered innocent unless and until they are proven guilty.

There is a far too prevalent tendency in this country and in the United States to degrade the word Arab and Arab peoples. It is subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, suggested that all PLO are terrorists. All Palestinians are PLO, so before long you get to the nasty implication that all Arabs are seen to be terrorists.

How many times, when the increase in the price of oil is discussed in the media, does one hear the expression "the Arab states have again hiked the price of oil"? Often this is followed by the use of the expression blackmail. Of course in OPEC are such prominent non Arab states as Nigeria, Venezuela, Iran, Indonesia and Ecuador.

This same tendency to stigmatize and suspect whole groups is revealed in our government's immigration department. Time and time again when Palestinian leaders are invited to address perfectly reputable and respected organizations they are harrassed, delayed, and made totally unwelcome at immigration centres and borders of this country. I spoke in the House some months ago about the treatment accorded Dr. Fayez Sayegh, a distinguished scholar and statesman, who was guest speaker at the annual meeting of the Canadian Arab Federation. This was as unnecessary as it was deplorable.

Of course any government has the right, indeed the obligation, to give thought to national security. In a world where terrorism is tragically too common there is a special problem. But it is wrong to assume that terrorism is unique to some frustrated Palestinian people. We know that there is much violence, and even in the Middle East it is not confined to Palestinians or Arabs. It is wrong to be snooping on decent Canadian citizens because their people

Adjournment Motion

came from an Arab country. Are our security people checking up on all Irish societies in this country because there is terrorism in Ireland? Surely not. But there is much snooping into Arab organizations in this country, which is reprehensible and indecent.

The *Globe and Mail's* sensationalist article has been injurious to many of the 90,000 Canadians of Arab origin with its reference to conspiracy, and students plotting this, and others scheming that. The minister, of course, is not responsible for the press, and the bias of the *Globe and Mail* on the Middle East crisis is too well known to warrant discussion. But I do call on the minister who, while often wrong, is still, I think, a well intentioned man, to be just and fair in his treatment of Arab Canadians. I ask him to see that his security people do not trespass on the rights of decent Canadians because they happen to be related to people from the Arab world.

Mr. Hugh Poulin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) may I say that I know that he has stated in his concluding remarks that the sensational article which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* is not the responsibility of the minister.

In response to the hon. gentleman's question I must repeat what the minister has already said, that is, that the RCMP has indicated that there is no plot among Arab Canadians such as imputed in the *Globe and Mail* last week. I repeat this, for I wish to make it very clear that I believe Canadians of Arab background are honest, hard working citizens, and their integrity and honesty should not be questioned.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Poulin: Doubts of this nature cast upon any group in Canada because of ethnic background are most unfair and unjust.

However, as I am sure this House is aware, there has been an increasing amount of terrorist activity in recent years. This activity has not been limited to any one country. Indeed it would appear that no country is immune from these attacks. I am sure that this is of concern to all members of this House, and likewise to all Canadians.

The Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) has an obligation, through the RCMP, to ensure the security and safety of Canadians from these terrorist activities. The RCMP security service is in communication with all ethnic communities in Canada in an attempt to ensure that terrorist activity may be discovered before it can harm any citizen. It is part of the ongoing dialogue with people in Canada who may have information or who are prepared to co-operate in ensuring that terrorist elements are not successful in carrying out their acts in this country.

Although terrorist activity is not limited to any one particular time or location, the incident at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich shows clearly that individuals or groups who favour these methods endeavour to select times and places which provide the greatest amount of publicity for their cause.

The RCMP security service is concerned about the possibility of terrorist activity at the Montreal Olympics, and

Adjournment Motion

therefore is taking every precaution to ensure that there are no such occurrences. They would be derelict in their duty as security officers, as would the Solicitor General, the minister responsible for the RCMP, if they did not proceed in this fashion.

The Solicitor General has stated publicly that the RCMP are aware of the existence of many individuals and groups who are sympathizers on both sides of the Palestinian conflict. As I have stated, the RCMP are always on guard against terrorism of any kind, and in this respect become aware of groups and individuals who are sympathizers to one side or the other. This is not limited to this conflict alone.

Once again I think it is most unfair and most regrettable if this story has cast a shadow of subversion, as has been described by the hon. member, on the many thousands of decent, law abiding Canadians of Arab descent.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!