

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has already referred to his discussions with IAEA and I think has made it very clear to the hon. member what the position of Canada is, as the Prime Minister also indicated in a public statement at the Habitat conference.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PAKISTAN—ALLEGED REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL NUCLEAR ASSISTANCE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He says the international agency has sufficient capability for inspection. It would be interesting if he would ascertain how many inspections have actually been carried out in the last three years at the CANDU plant outside Karachi. My question in relation to Pakistan is simply this: the minister has had on his desk for two months a request from Pakistan for added nuclear assistance. Has the government at long last come to a decision in respect of that request, and if so, what is it?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has things mixed up. The situation is that Canada has requested a renegotiation with Pakistan of the present safeguards arrangements with a view to upgrading them. This is presently what is before the government of Pakistan and before the government of Canada. They have not requested additional assistance above what is presently provided.

* * *

ENERGY

RENEGOTIATION OF CONTRACT WITH ARGENTINA FOR NUCLEAR REACTOR—REQUEST FOR ESTIMATE OF COST

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Again the minister has been evading questions with regard to AECL cost of the Argentinian project by saying for six months at least that this has been under renegotiation. How long can the renegotiations go on, and has the government any idea what that is going to cost Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give the hon. member a precise time frame. Quite clearly it is in Canada's interest to make the best deal it possibly can. That is what Canadian negotiators are presently in the process of doing.

Oral Questions

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INDIA—INCARCERATION OF GEORGES FERNANDES—REQUEST FOR REPRESENTATIONS FOR RELEASE

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In light of Canada's association with the Republic of India in the Commonwealth and the long friendship between the two countries both of which are or were united by respect for democratic freedom, will the minister express to Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India or the appropriate representative of the government there, regret that one Georges Fernandes, a leading democratic socialist and trade union leader has been arrested and imprisoned for political reasons. This action is calculated to destroy democratic opposition in that country. Will the minister suggest that Mr. Fernandes should be released?

● (1420)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, any effort on the part of Canada to suggest to Indian authorities how they should administer the internal affairs of their country would very likely be more counter-productive than helpful in the present situation. The hon. member's representations, I am sure, speak for themselves.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate sincerely what the minister is saying, but suggest that when fundamental freedoms are at stake and many people throughout the world are expressing their regret, Canada might join in.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

PROGRAM FOR REHABILITATION OF RURAL HOUSING—POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT WITH QUEBEC ON ELIGIBLE REGIONS

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

A few weeks ago the minister sent a communiqué to hon. members in which he announced a support program for the rehabilitation of rural housing. As far as Quebec is concerned, could the minister tell the House whether a special agreement has been reached between his department and a department of the province on the regions to be designated as eligible under this program?

[English]

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, yes, agreement has been reached with the Quebec Housing Corporation but I am not quite certain at the moment if the agreement has been signed. I shall be glad to check. The designated areas have been agreed upon with the province.