

*Oral Questions*

December 31, were the prices to the U.S.S.R. below the cost of production?

**Mr. Lang:** I am glad that the right hon. gentleman has been able to rephrase his question so that it is in order and therefore I have an opportunity to answer it. The prices which were obtained from the U.S.S.R. in those agreements were, in the judgment of the Canadian Wheat Board, the best possible prices obtainable at that time.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Lang:** Any suggestion to the contrary can only come from those who would want to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** With a few more ministers like this minister, the Wheat Board will be destroyed, because that is what happens when wheat is sold below the cost of production.

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**HOUSING**

**CANCELLATION BY HALLIWELL TERRACE LIMITED OF CONTRACTS WITH PERSONS FOR PURCHASE OF CONDOMINIUMS**

**Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. In view of the fact that almost 200 people who purchased condominium apartments at 980 Broadview Avenue, Toronto, have had their purchase contracts cancelled by the builder, Halliwell Terrace Limited, by the use of a "loagal leaphole"—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Gilbert:**—legal loophole in the act stand to lose their apartments unless they pay \$1,600 to \$4,000 more, would the minister look into this matter and advise the House whether the building has been financed under NHA? If so, would he require the builder to register the condominium plan forthwith with the municipality and the province so that the contracts may be binding and enforceable and people may retain their apartments without having to pay the price increase?

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, has contacted my office on this matter. We are making inquiries to see whether CMHC is involved and, if it is, whether there is something we can do for the purchasers who seem to have been abused in this case.

**Mr. Gilbert:** Would the minister assure the House that any builder using NHA financing or CMHC financing would be prohibited from using this legal chicanery exemplified by Halliwell Terrace Limited?

**Mr. Basford:** I am not sure I should leap into that loop-hole, Mr. Speaker. However, we did mention in the Speech from the Throne a plan that we would be putting forward

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

for the provision of a system of warranties for purchasers of new homes which would include, of course, condominium units. This is being worked out at present.

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**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF RONALD PATRICK LIPPERT IMPRISONED IN CUBA**

**Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs which is further to a question I asked in the House a week or so ago regarding Ronald Patrick Lippert, a Canadian citizen from Kitchener, Ontario, who has spent ten years of his life, as part of a 30-year sentence, in a Cuban jail. Can the minister at this time give assurances to the House that the government is willing to undertake immediate negotiations with the Cuban government for the release of Mr. Lippert?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we were in touch with Mr. Lippert from our embassy in Cuba as recently as January 25, 1973. We are prepared to give him all possible assistance. I can add that he is in very good health.

**Mr. Cossitt:** Yesterday the minister announced in the House details concerning the release of Canadians imprisoned in Viet Nam. Especially in view of the age and state of health of Mr. Lippert's mother, and in view of Mr. Lippert's diabetic condition, is the minister willing to treat this Canadian, imprisoned in Cuba for ten years, with the same degree of attention and importance?

**Mr. Sharp:** We have treated this matter with great importance. We have made representations to the Cuban government. I am sure the hon. member is familiar with the circumstances of the case and would not want me to reveal them here.

**NEGOTIATIONS WITH CUBA RESPECTING AIRCRAFT HIJACKING**

**Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister regarding a problem in Cuba. How is our combined delegation from the Department of External Affairs, the Department of Transport and the Department of Justice, I believe, together with officials of the Canadian Transport Commission, doing in Cuba in working out an air piracy and hijacking agreement, especially in view of the fact that the United States seems to have signed one already? Or does the minister think we should negotiate through Switzerland?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to inform the House that we have reached the substance of an agreement with Cuba, just as has the United States.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!