

say that in a scrum outside the House I indicated, as I should not have, that Mr. Mann had broken the law of India. He is in fact charged with breaking the law of India. I apologize to the House for that mistake.

In terms of the representations which are being made, they are extensive and are made on a regular basis, following the normal and accepted diplomatic procedures by our High Commissioner, and by way of a conversation between my Deputy Minister and the Acting High Commissioner of India to Canada. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, that the best judge of the effectiveness of the response of Canada to this question is Mr. Mann himself. Mr. Mann himself in recent conversations—yesterday—with our High Commissioner expresses himself as being highly pleased with the way in which the Government of Canada has responded to his situation.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has apologized for saying yesterday that Mr. Mann broke the law, therefore, in effect, presuming that he was guilty before he had his day in court. Has the Secretary of State for External Affairs personally conveyed his apologies in that regard to the Indian High Commissioner? And has he instructed our High Commissioner in India to convey his apologies to the Indian authorities?

I ask the Minister this question because, if he does not do so, there is no way that the Canadian Government can get the Indian Government to take seriously anything it says because Mr. Mann stands convicted in the eyes of the Canadian Government and of the Minister.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have not done that, nor do I intend to. I can assure the House of Commons that the Government of India takes very seriously the representations which are being made by the Government of Canada.

DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS' RELATIONS WITH MEDIA

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs if his seeming acquiescence in the detention of Mr. Mann by the Indian Government is linked to his own order gagging all of the officials of his Department—even the press officers who are paid to speak to the press—from speaking to the press and the public? This is in contradiction to the policy he himself issued when he was Prime Minister, which required openness on the part of officials. Is there a link here? In fact, is the Minister intending to apply his own gag order to himself?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no. The elaboration, Mr. Speaker, is that if the Hon. Member is looking for the missing link, he should turn his eyes to himself.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

SPONSORSHIP REQUESTS FOR SIX SOVIET PRISONERS HELD IN AFGHANISTAN

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Further to yesterday's question concerning the six political prisoners being held by the Afghan authorities, it seems the Minister misled the Member for Outremont and this House when she stated that no request had been made on behalf of these prisoners. According to the facts, six formal sponsorship requests for these prisoners were made in June of this year. The reference numbers are: R-11044 to R-11049.

Since she has privately admitted she was wrong, is the Minister prepared to make a public apology today for having misled this House?

● (1420)

[English]

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when the Hon. Member raised the question yesterday there were no names attached, and there had been several groups under consideration. I was speaking of one group and she was speaking of the other, and I very sincerely apologize to her for the fact that I did not clearly indicate the group that I was speaking about. However, having reviewed this situation, having looked at the group she later told me she was speaking about, I can certainly assure her that my predecessor had indeed said there would be applications provided to these people should they meet all the requirements, including medical requirements.

We have not been able to persuade the local authorities in a very inaccessible border area to allow medical examinations to take place. But we have asked for the co-operation of other countries in helping to have this done. We have asked for the co-operation of the International Red Cross, and we are very actively pursuing their case in the hope that they will eventually be brought to Canada.

[Translation]

ADMISSION OF REFUGEES TO CANADA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, Canada has already admitted several hundred Chilean refugees without medical certificates. Does the Minister's reply mean that the new Government has changed course and from now on intends to restrict entry into Canada of refugees especially those from totalitarian countries that are—