

Oral Questions

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, we have had reports of some disturbances in Cyprus, but our information is that they are of the order of student demonstrations and are perhaps related to the forthcoming general election. They are not disputes between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. They are disputes between two factions of Greeks. Therefore it is really more a matter for the police in Cyprus and not part of our peacekeeping role.

VIET NAM--CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR CANADIAN
ELEMENT IN SUPERVISORY COMMISSION IF CIVIL WAR
BREAKS OUT

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Has the Canadian government a contingency plan to be followed by the supervisory force which will be leaving shortly for Viet Nam in the eventuality of a civil war in that country breaking out after the cease-fire commences, particularly after American forces have been completely evacuated from Viet Nam? If so, would the minister advise the House what that contingency plan is?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have given very serious consideration to the safety of our personnel, and in the event of hostilities being renewed we have not one but more than one contingency plan which would enable us to evacuate all Canadian personnel from Viet Nam.

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CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

NUMBER OF CONVICTED MURDERERS NOW IN JAIL

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General. Earlier in the week I asked him about the commutation of sentences of people who were charged and convicted of the murder of police officers. I have a list of 12 commutations by order in council since January 4, 1968. I should like to ask the Solicitor General—this is a serious question which might affect the length of the debate on capital punishment—whether there is anyone now incarcerated in any institution in Canada for whom all the processes of law have been completed and who stands convicted of capital murder at the present time?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): There are two cases of people who have killed either a policeman or a prison guard and who have been convicted, but appeals are still open to them and they have not yet approached the Solicitor General or the cabinet for commutation.

• (1130)

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I think I know the answer to my question, but I want to make this clear. After all due processes of the law have been completed—when I say “due processes of law” I mean the trial, the court of appeal of the province, the Supreme Court of Canada, or any other proceedings whereby a man might get a new trial—is there anybody now incarcerated in an institution for whom all the procedures have been completed, and

who is now subject to capital punishment, because this might affect the length of the debate itself?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member and to the minister that we are anticipating a debate. The hon. member has said that the answer to this question might have an effect on the length of the debate, but we have not yet reached that stage. I gather that there will be such a debate later today. The question might be asked when the minister has the floor later this morning, but having allowed him to reply to the first question perhaps he might reply to the supplementary.

Mr. Allmand: To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, there are no people in that category, but I will check it to make sure.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. In light of the fact that since January 4, 1968, we have had complete abolition of capital punishment, *de facto* if not *de jure*, why is this bill now before the House of Commons and not some other bill affecting the economy of the country?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Kingston and The Islands.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

RIGHTS OF NORTHERN QUEBEC INDIANS—INQUIRY AS
TO PRESENTATION OF STATEMENT BY GOVERNMENT
AT HEARINGS ON JAMES BAY HYDRO PROJECT

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. In light of the great concern of Canadians and the clearly defined constitutional responsibilities of the federal government, which bind the government to protecting the Indian people, can the Prime Minister tell the House when the government will present a statement to the interlocutory injunction hearings on the James Bay hydro project, outlining the government's position on the rights of Northern Quebec Indians?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this has been stated by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and I believe that the Minister of Justice has also indicated that we had representatives present at those hearings. I know of no statement to be made by the government.

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and The Islands): Am I to understand then that it is the policy of the government not to declare any formal position with regard to the rights of the native people affected by the James Bay development project?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I think it would not be appropriate in any case for us in this House to comment at this point upon the proceedings which are occurring in a court.

Mr. Hees: What are you going to do?