

government should get in touch with the American government, even though the minister displays an aversion to having the Americans look after our interests, ask it to get in touch with the American embassy and have the American embassy communicate with those South Vietnamese who stood with us in the dark hours.

I have seen them there. Months ago they feared an ultimate victory of the North. Will the government request the United States embassy to get in touch with these several employees of the Canadian embassy and endeavour to arrange for exit permits for them? The conscience of Canada is asking for action. Press reports to the effect that these people were denied transportation while two automobiles and some vases were loaded in their place, is something that ought to be clarified. The government should now get in touch with the United States and ask for its co-operation in bringing about the preservation of the lives of those who gave their all for Canada by remaining on duty.

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

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I would express my delight at seeing the right hon. member for Prince Albert back in his seat in his usual form and, more than that, in such good health.

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

**Mr. Sharp:** I will now attempt to deal with the questions that have been put by the right hon. member. We made many efforts to get exit permits granted to the staff of our embassy in Saigon. I should first make it clear that not all of them want to leave. I rather regret the implication of the right hon. member's question that association with Canada is going to put their lives in jeopardy because I do not think that is so. Canada has always acted in Viet Nam in a very objective way. We were members of the International Control Commission. I do not believe it can be said that we became involved, as did the United States, in the war between the North and the South.

On the second point, as evidence of the problem that we face, I said in reply to a previous question that our ambassador did attempt to take to the airport five Vietnamese who were relatives of Vietnamese in Canada. They were taken out of the car and refused permission to proceed. I do not think the House quite realizes it is not that we want a piece of paper. That is not our problem. The problem is that Vietnamese who wanted to get to the airport without a permit from the Vietnamese government were denied access. Their progress was impeded. We had no armed forces. We had no way of running such a blockade.

I say to my right hon. friend that we did as much as we could do under the circumstances. We have provided the American government with lists of relatives of Vietnamese in Canada. We were successful to a limited extent. On the plane that came out, we brought some dependants of Vietnamese. I forget the number. There were not many. However, we brought as many at that time as were given permission to leave.

### Oral Questions

We are doing what we can to help in the situation. However, as I said previously, we have to act in a way that we can be successful. Even though we get some out now, there are going to be a great many who will remain. We want to be able to act on their behalf in affecting reunification of families in the future.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I was not dealing with the general group in South Viet Nam. I was speaking specifically of the six or eight in the Canadian mission there. I am not speaking of the larger group. I asked whether the minister would reconsider and get in touch with the Americans. After all, these people who were employed there have some diplomatic rights. They should be entitled to leave. If the Americans get in touch and are successful, will the government of Canada provide a plane to bring to Canada these people who, despite the minister's optimistic statement as to their future, face almost certain death?

● (1430)

**Mr. Sharp:** May I deal with just one of those cases? The driver of the automobile which took the Chargé d'Affaires out to the airport for the evacuation got through, of course, because he was driving the car. He boarded the plane and it was then discovered he was the father of nine children; he was persuaded it would be better if he did not abandon them in Viet Nam. So, he left. We do have a responsibility toward these people, but I want to say to the right hon. gentleman that not all of them want to leave Viet Nam. I believe we have more of a responsibility for the dependants and relatives of Vietnamese in Canada than we have for these people, because they have no special ties with Canada and it does not necessarily follow they would wish to come to Canada.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** A most evasive answer.

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### HOUSING

#### REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT OF AHOP PROGRAM TO INCLUDE LAND SERVICED BY SEPTIC TANKS

**Mr. J.-J. Blais (Nipissing):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs; it arises out of the statement made on Friday by the hon. gentleman to the effect that there are still funds available for the AHOP program. In view of the high demand in my area for funding under this program—no doubt there is a similar demand in other areas of rural Canada where people live in small communities—and in view of the fact that under present policy the program is not available to them, would the minister consider amending government policy so as to make land serviced by septic tanks eligible under the program?

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

**Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of State for Urban Affairs):** I am pleased my hon. friend has noted the success of the program, as hon. members opposite have always done. I would point out that 40,000 NHA loans have been made in rural areas, mostly in respect of property