

Oral Questions

These figures are quite accurate. I might point out to the Hon. Member that no decision has been taken to purchase British subs. The French are also in the game.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): We on this side of the House are finding it increasingly difficult to get factual answers to a very serious question. Both Ministers are away again today.

GOVERNMENT'S PROJECTED COST

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence has stated that the total cost, including infrastructure, will be about \$7.5 billion over the lifetime of the contract, which would be about 15 years. However, the editor of *Jane's Fighting Ships*, one of the great experts in the world, says that it will be at least \$11 billion, and other experts put it as high as \$16 billion.

When will the Government tell the people of Canada what is its cost estimate as of now?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The Minister of Defence has—

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): No, he hasn't.

Mr. Andre: The cost of nuclear submarines is approximately 1.6 times the cost of conventional submarines; support services, about 1.8. In exchange for that we get a submarine which is several times more effective in terms of allowing Canada to meet its defence commitments.

The facts are there. If the Hon. Member does not want to accept them, that is his problem, not the Government's.

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[Translation]

VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILLING TO ASK NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION TO REVERSE DECISION ON MAISON D'AMITIÉ

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question was intended for the Minister of Public Works, but in his absence I will put it to the Prime Minister.

According to a report published last week, one out of eight women suffers psychological, economic, sexual or verbal abuse. At a time when the Government should be acting rather than enforcing, it is forcing a friendship centre in my constituency out of existence by hitting it with a more than \$3,000 monthly rent increase. Can the Minister, or in his absence the Prime Minister answer the question?

Is he prepared to ask the National Capital Commission, owner of the building, to reverse that decision—enjoin the NCC to keep on subsidizing the Maison d'amitié, and as in the past, until we have a national policy on abused women, to keep on not only subsidizing but put forward a national policy along

with its provincial counterparts in order to reach a solution on such a difficult problem?

Mr. Claude Lanthier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, the case of the friendship residence is very well known at the Public Works Department. For ten years it has been rented for \$1 a year with a goal to encourage that cause. Recently however the National Capital Commission took the view that it was not its responsibility to directly subsidize that kind of activity and it has urged people to get funding from more adequate sources. It is not a matter of cutting funds, but simply of restoring profitability to a property that had not been reviewed for the past 10 years.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, the Maison d'amitié pays all the costs of a usual tenant. It does not pay rent on the basis of the market value of the building, but the previous Government accepted for ten years to subsidize that undertaking because it meets a serious need in the Ottawa—Vanier constituency.

● (1450)

[English]

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER CONVENE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUBJECT OF BATTERED WOMEN

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): My supplementary question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare but in his absence I will direct it to the Prime Minister again. Will the Prime Minister take it upon himself to convene a national conference on the question of battered women? Will he ask his provincial counterparts when they meet in November to put that question on the agenda so that we can come to grips with this most difficult and serious problem?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the problem of battered women in Canada represents one of our most serious social and legal challenges. As a country we have not come to grips with what is not only a societal problem but a very serious malady which is affecting women, families, and children, the fibre of our society. The response collectively of this country, provincial, federal and so on, has been inadequate to a very grave, damaging problem.

I want to give my hon. friend the assurance that we are working with all levels of government and will commit all the resources required to ensure that women so affected by these violent crimes receive full justice in Canada—

Ms. Copps: Start with the National Capital Commission.

Mr. Mulroney: I will be working with my hon. friend and other Members of Parliament on this very sensitive matter to ensure that Canada deals effectively and firmly with the problem affecting battered women in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!