

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Trudeau:**—he will realize that for the purpose of arriving at a cabinet decision it is necessary for ministers to have discussions among themselves freely, and not have those discussions recorded publicly. It is obvious why I will not, and should not, table the discussion or the minutes of discussion in cabinet, and the Leader of the Opposition should know enough about the cabinet system to understand that.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** We will.

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[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

#### SHIPBUILDING IN LAUZON, QUEBEC—REQUEST PRELIMINARY STUDY BE SHORT

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Considering that the government is about to award one of the biggest contracts in the history of shipbuilding and that this program would apparently secure 4,500 jobs, and given the unemployment situation in the towns or cities I have in mind, namely Sorel, Montreal, Lauzon and other localities in Canada, in the circumstances could the Prime Minister make a commitment or be prepared to ask the people who are responsible for this contract to make the related studies in the shortest time possible, precisely to enable the builders to draw the benefits of this contract which is apparently rather fantastic?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I understand the interest of the hon. member in such a subject but if he has followed the policy of the government and the announcements which were published when talking about building ships for the Canadian navy under the responsibility of the Department of National Defence, he will certainly remember that we mentioned one ship to be launched during the year 1984 or 1985. Thus I do not think this question is realistic. Before building these ships we obviously need very detailed and very complicated plans. These plans must then be presented to the bidders. There are several stages to go through. So I think it is not realistic to suggest that these dates be set earlier so as to meet the hon. member's request.

**Mr. La Salle:** Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. I am trying to reassure the persons involved and of course the population of Canada. Could the Prime Minister ask that these studies be completed as soon as possible? I do not ask to lessen the importance of these studies, but considering the unemployment situation in Canada today, I simply ask the government to act more quickly in this regard than it has done over the last ten years.

● (1442)

[English]

### ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

#### STOPFORTH CASE—REQUEST CROWN PAY LEGAL COSTS

**Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Justice I would address my question to the Prime Minister. It has been announced that the Minister of Supply and Services is going to launch an appeal with respect to the \$10,000 in damages awarded by Mr. Justice Lief for the libelling of Mr. Larry Stopforth.

In view of the fact that the Minister of Supply and Services has the full resources of the government behind him with respect to legal costs, in the interests of equity will the Prime Minister recommend to the Minister of Justice that Mr. Stopforth's legal costs be paid by the government so that he will not be facing very large costs for what could be a series of appeals from this point forward?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, in the area of criminal law, where the federal government has jurisdiction, we have proposals and procedures for assisting people who are victims of crimes, and so on, and who incur damages in the way of costs. But in the area of civil law, or common law, which is not within our jurisdiction, we do not have these procedures.

I understand the common law and civil law provinces do have measures of assisting litigants who are in need of assistance. But certainly, as a matter of general practice, I do not think the hon. member would suggest that every time the government is sued by somebody, or a minister or official of the government is sued, the government should pay the expenses of the suer.

**An hon. Member:** The "suer"?

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

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Prime Minister that the Minister of Supply and Services had better be—

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

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** I will wait until the government side quiets down.

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

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** I would suggest that the Minister of Supply and Services had better be successful because a Conservative president of the treasury board will look very hard at any payment of damages. I ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the very interesting precedents given by the Minister of Justice, the government has paid the legal costs of the former minister of transport, Senator Marchand, who was sued by the Crown attorney in Ottawa for saying that the Crown attorney had double-crossed him. Also, is there an undertaking from the former minister of finance, Mr. John Turner, who sued the