

Petitions

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, to recap briefly what I said to the House on Monday, I spoke with the ambassador from the Soviet Union in Ottawa and indicated to him that we would be prepared, on the basis of information from Mr. Shcharansky's relatives, to have them sponsor him and issue the necessary documentation for him to come to Canada. As is the normal custom, the ambassador merely took note of my representations and indicated he would pass them on to his government. I saw him again yesterday and I did not get a specific indication from him that this had been done but the conversation led me to believe it had been done. I have no way of knowing how soon they will respond to those representations, of course. As soon as they do I will be glad to advise hon. members and determine what further action, if any, it will be necessary to take.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the importance of this case would the minister undertake to find out exactly what did happen and to gain more than a mere impression and inform the House as soon as possible because of the interest in the country?

Mr. Jamieson: Of course, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell the hon. member that in line with the normal procedure followed in this case I think it is fair to say that there is no doubt that the ambassador was obliged to transmit the representations I made to him to his government. Whether his government chooses to respond is something I cannot forecast but I must say he accepted my representations very fully and indicated he would pass them on so I expect we will receive an answer.

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ENERGY

PROPOSED PURCHASE OF TANKERS BY ALBERTA LIQUID
NATURAL GAS GROUP—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE CANADIAN
SHIPYARDS PATRONIZED

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources concerns the depressed state of the shipbuilding industry in Canada. There is a report that the consortium of Petro-Canada and the Alberta liquid natural gas group who are proposing to bring liquid natural gas out of the eastern Arctic into the eastern markets of Canada, will purchase two tankers from a foreign government at a value of about \$400 million. In view of the fact that the government has a regulatory process which must be followed before this purchase can be made which involves the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Department of Transport and others, would the minister be prepared to give the House a guarantee that this major shipbuilding and ship purchasing project which may take place in the near future involving the Crown corporation, Petro-Canada, will take place in Canada where it belongs and not abroad?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member were to look over the record he would see that I answered a similar question recently and I gave such assurances. I might take the opportunity to tell him it is premature to speculate on any application by Petro-Canada for such a major proposal. Certainly, work is underway and a study is being conducted. I hope it will be possible to say more about this in the near future but at the moment it is still very much a schematic or conceptual approach as far as the corporation is concerned.

Mr. Leggatt: A supplementary question. I assume that is a "yes" answer—that we have received some kind of guarantee. The Minister of National Defence has indicated from time to time that in the \$10 billion replacement project for naval vessels over the next 20 years, these vessels will be built in Canada where possible or feasible. I should like the minister to direct his attention to this and perhaps give the House a guarantee that this major shipbuilding program will be executed in Canada, period; not if, and, but or maybe. Can we have some kind of guarantee that the 5,000 shipyard workers who have been laid off will have a chance of getting back to work with a government policy that assures Canadian ships will be built in Canada?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce has made a number of statements with respect to assistance for the shipbuilding industry. If there is some particular question that the hon. member wants to put to the Minister of National Defence I believe he should do so.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister as a follow-up to the question I asked on March 17. Since the former premier of Manitoba, Mr. Ed Schreyer, declined to take a federal position at that time and has now indicated his disinterest in completing his term as Leader of the Opposition in Manitoba, would the Prime Minister indicate whether Mr. Schreyer has again been offered an appointment to a federal position?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I will inquire, Mr. Speaker.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

VIOLATIONS OF VIETNAMESE HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the table the second