

• (1450)

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, there is a question of time involved, and a question of anxiety for those people who might have to return to Poland.

The Minister knows in recent years there have been virtually no Ukrainian refugees from eastern Europe, and in this case a special permit is justified. At the present time because of the lack of action the Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society is now sponsoring on its own 40 of the most pressing cases of youths aged 16 and under.

Because there is this urgency, and because the Austrian Government cannot guarantee that these persons will not be returned to Poland, where they may be regarded as traitors, will the Minister set a deadline for next week to make absolutely clear what government policy is, and what she intends to do?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we have been assured by the Austrian Government that these people will not be sent back to Poland. We are working with the Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society right now. I am not prepared to put a deadline on when those discussions will end.

We certainly encouraged them in terms of the private sponsorship of the most needy cases, and we have expedited that process through our officials. We will continue to look at it. In respect to the time urgency, it does take a certain amount of time anyway.

* * *

SUPPLY AND SERVICES

BRITISH COLUMBIA—VALUE OF FEDERAL PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS

Mrs. Mary Collins (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Supply and Services. I was dismayed and disturbed recently by statements that were made in the House which would allege that federal government procurement from companies in British Columbia has declined since the Government took office.

Mr. Riis: As a percentage, it has.

Mrs. Collins: After 20 years of neglect from the previous Government, it was my impression that in recent years the value of federal government contracts in British Columbia had actually increased.

Mr. Riis: The percentage has gone down every year under a Tory Government.

Mrs. Collins: Could the Minister clarify the situation? Could the Minister also indicate what he is prepared to do to

Oral Questions

ensure that companies in British Columbia get an even greater share of procurement from the federal Government?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should know that this would not be the first time that Members from the Opposition, particularly the New Democratic Party, would be selective in their statistics.

As the Member points out, the fact is that British Columbia and the West had been ignored for some 20 years by previous administrations.

Mr. Fulton: Right up until today.

Mr. Jelinek: In the last year alone, in terms of dollar value, an increase of some 12 per cent in procurement went to British Columbia. In the last two years together the increase in terms of dollars was some 20 per cent.

We are still not satisfied with those figures, as I told business people in British Columbia and the West. That is why the Minister of Western Diversification and I last month announced the new western procurement initiatives which will bring an additional \$600 million on top of the 20 per cent increase.

We have brought in the small business access which will benefit all small business people, and with the large population of small businesses in British Columbia that will help British Columbia.

Last week I announced the elevation of the status of our Supply and Services office in Vancouver to a Pacific directorate. Now British Columbian businesses can do business with the Government of Canada in British Columbia as opposed to here in Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

LABOUR CONDITIONS

RETRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS—USE OF HAMILTON INSTITUTION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and it concerns the damning indictment of this Government's record toward older workers. She actually had the nerve to say earlier in the House today in response to a question from my colleague, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, that the Canadian Jobs Strategy was the vehicle for retraining that was getting these workers back into the market-place.

If the Canadian Jobs Strategy is working so well, can she explain why the second largest campus for retraining and apprenticeship in the Province of Ontario, that is the Hitac campus in the city of Hamilton, is on the verge of closing