

British Columbia Members of Parliament and a number of Cabinet Ministers repeatedly have promised that the ice-breaker would be built equally in Vancouver and Victoria, a measure which is desperately needed to save our shipbuilding industry. Since the Deputy Prime Minister has been actively interested in this, can he tell us when construction of the Polar 8 ice-breaker will begin as promised repeatedly for the last three years?²³

In response, the then Minister of Supply and Services Otto Jelinek stated:

...the Hon. Member should know that the Polar 8 [is] in its definition phase. There have been...some ownership problems with the company. The program and the plan is to continue to look forward to the Polar 8 icebreaker being built both in Vancouver and Victoria shipyards and I believe that everything is going according to plan at this point in time.²⁴

After charging that problems with the Polar 8 were the result of underfunding by the Government, Ms. Mitchell reiterated the demand that the icebreaker be built equally in Vancouver and Victoria.²⁵ She then asked:

If there is a financial problem why does the Government not increase the subsidy? It really was underfunded as I understand it. Does the Minister not agree that a world class icebreaker which will do many practical things in our Arctic waters as well as deal with the sovereignty issue is far more important than wasting money on expensive nuclear subs?²⁶

The Minister replied:

...we do not need the Hon. Member to tell us that an ice-breaker is very important for our sovereignty. It is this Government which initiated that program.²⁷

The status of the Polar 8 was again raised in the House on 9 May 1989 by NDP Member Audrey McLaughlin. Recalling Government promises to begin construction of the vessel by Spring 1989, Ms. McLaughlin asked when, in fact, construction would commence.²⁸ Minister of Transport Benoit Bouchard replied that the Government was proceeding with the Polar 8 operation. He then added:

However there are two issues.... The first is the shipyard which is being processed at the present time. The other one is the problem of the design. A proposal has to

23 *Commons Debates*, 16 September 1988, p. 19332.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 19332-19333.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 19333.

28 *Commons Debates*, 8 May 1989, p. 1434.