

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

REPRESENTATIONS TO FRANCE AGAINST BOARDING OF
"GREENPEACE III" BY FRENCH SAILORS

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the government's announced grant of \$12,000 to Captain David McTaggart of Vancouver to enable him to return the *Greenpeace III* to Canada, and in view of the minister's statement in the House that he has been pressing the *Greenpeace* case with the French government, will the minister now tell the House what official action has been taken by the Canadian government to protest the boarding of this Canadian vessel and what has been the response by the government of France?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have made presentations to the foreign minister of France on a number of occasions. My department has made direct representations to the government of France through the embassy. We are now in process of deciding in which way to press our case against the French government and the decision has not been finally made.

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IMMIGRATION

REASONS FOR REQUIREMENT OF FIRM JOB OFFER OR
POSSESSION OF SKILL NEEDED IN CANADA

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the minister responsible for immigration. It is based on the fact that he has produced some important changes in the regulations regarding immigrants. Immigrants are only to be admitted if they have a firm job offer or if they possess a skill needed in Canada. Keeping in mind that there is a task force working on immigration and that the minister has been asking for suggestions from the Canadian people, can the minister tell us why he was in such a rush to bring in these changes? What was the main reason? Has he concluded there will be a higher level of unemployment in Canada this year? What was the main reason?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the interim changes in the points system, which were made by regulation, came about after five or six years of no change in the initial point system as developed, I think, in 1967. We made the decision to make these changes, based on analysis of the pattern of employment and other matters affecting immigrants over the last three or four years. The information has been made available to us recently. We know that there is a higher incidence of unemployment among immigrants who have no occupational skill capabilities. With the increasing number of applications from abroad we thought that this would be the propitious moment to make the change. It does not preclude, of course, further adjustment, as the ongoing, more profound immigration policy review is completed.

Mr. Alexander: Is it the intention of the minister to continue arbitrarily to change the Immigration Act and/or

Oral Questions

the regulations notwithstanding the fact that he has a task force looking into this matter and has requested suggestions from the Canadian people? In other words, has he abandoned the task force and has he concluded that suggestions from the Canadian people are meaningless?

Mr. Andras: No, Mr. Speaker. There would be no way in which I could arbitrarily change the legislation even if I so desired, which I do not. It would be subject to the will of the House. The regulation change is, as I said, an interim change. I do not think that we should wait to effect any improvements that have appeared to us to be wise until the task force completes its work and until that results in legislation, which, as I have indicated publicly, will probably not be until 1975. In the meantime, it appeared to be wise to make these changes.

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● (1140)

HEALTH

AMOUNT OF FUNDS PROVIDED TO MEDICAL RESEARCH
COUNCIL

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the fact that government spending on unemployment insurance is \$100 per capita compared with only \$2 per capita for the entire medical research program, will the minister say that steps are being taken to avoid the financial crisis situation at the Medical Research Council, as it has been described by medical and scientific organizations across Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will allow the hon. minister to reply. However, it seems that many of the questions members put before the House appear to invite statements from ministers. I respectfully suggest to hon. members that this kind of question should be placed on the order paper. If ministers were to be allowed to respond to this type of question by making general statements, I assume that members to my left and others might protest that we were taking up too much of the time allotted for the question period. The minister should be allowed to indicate whether he proposes to give this information by way of a statement when the rules make it possible for a minister to do so.

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity of meeting representatives of the Medical Research Council on several occasions, and, following these meetings, \$1 million more than had been provided at the beginning was added to the budget of the Medical Research Council. The council advises me that, as a result of this amount, it will be able to maintain the same level of research as last year.