

I understand the hon. member has been travelling across the country with his work on the committee, and the issue of human rights in China has been raised consistently. I am sure that we will have the support of the House and Canadians for advocating human rights in China, and I appreciate that.

I would like to reaffirm to the member and the House the conviction of the government concerning the issue of human rights in China. The situation remains a concern to us and there are different efforts being ensured to advance that cause.

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[Translation]

DOUBLE HULLED SHIPS

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, for several days, the Minister of the Environment has been claiming that government regulations concerning double-hulled ships in Canada are in force, despite a contrary opinion from the legal service of the Department of Transport.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. As the one responsible for applying the Canada Shipping Act, does the Minister of Transport confirm, as his legal advisors indicate, that there is no regulation now in force under this act with respect to double-hulled ships?

• (1455)

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows very well that international agreements on ships plying Canadian waters and those anywhere else on earth allow 15 years to comply with international regulations.

Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, since there is no Canadian law, can the Minister of Transport inform his colleague in Environment that there are no regulations on double-hulled ships and that such regulations should be passed urgently in order to avoid environmental disasters?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, for the third time, I even gave the hon. member a copy of the law yesterday. Maybe he did not want to take it, but on page 1407, Chapter 36 of the Statutes of Canada, he will find the text of a law that was passed in 1993. Do you still want a copy?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. members, you know that from time to time it is necessary to have books to quote from in the House, but I would ask you all not to raise any books or papers.

Oral Questions

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Canadians have been constantly demanding that the government abolish the current MP pension plan which allows members to collect benefits after only six years of service.

The Prime Minister has stated that his government is reviewing this overly generous plan but that we have four or five years to deal with it.

We do not need a commission to tell us what needs to be done. We have already suggested changes that can be implemented immediately.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister commit to bringing the MPs' retirement compensation package in line with the private sector?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, the House has been previously informed, as hon. members know, that there was a study commissioned by the previous government that was brought to a committee of the House and is now under study by a committee of the House as provided for by the Parliament act with respect to compensation including pensions for members of Parliament.

The government has made it clear that it intends to bring about revisions to the pension plan for MPs. As soon as the Lapointe commission submits its report, which I understand will be about mid-July, we will examine the results. We will look at the recommendations. We will then proceed to deal with the matter of MPs' pensions and other compensation factors.

I have indicated previously to the House that we expect to deal with the matter of MPs' pensions prior to the end of the year.

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question.

Mid-July simply is not good enough. It has become public knowledge that the Leader of the Official Opposition, a man dedicated to the break-up of Canada, will become eligible for his pension on June 20.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister not agree that this alone constitutes a good enough reason to reform this extravagant MP pension plan?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, if any member of this Parliament is to receive a pension, first of all