

EastCan that its permit rights are valid under the federal permits. In the same way we have made the same declaration to other companies, so we have dealt with all companies on the same basis.

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IMMIGRATION

ATTITUDE TOWARD DEFECTING COMMUNISTS—CASE OF IVAN CHARALAMBIJ—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. It has to do with defecting communists who seek refuge in Canada. Is it the policy of the government—and I hope it is—that where there are no security implications those who come here for the purpose of getting away from the conditions under which they live and for the purpose of finding a land of freedom will be made welcome in Canada?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, given the caveat the right hon. gentleman has indicated my department does try to assist in every way possible the individuals to whom he is referring. We do have some difficulty with people who come here from Eastern Europe as tourists or visitors and seek to remain in the country. If we allow that to happen, I am somewhat concerned that we might shut off the flow of visitors who legitimately want to visit relatives and then go back home.

I have received representations from Ukrainian and Polish groups which have suggested that some thought be given to a quota system allowing perhaps 50 or 60 a year. I am considering that, but again it is a question of what criteria should be used. Should the first 50 be allowed, or should we call out certain numbers and put some value judgment on it? There are many difficulties, but we are trying to accommodate as many as we can given the caveat which the right hon. gentleman put in his question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I brought a case to the minister's attention, and he very benevolently said that consideration was being given to it. I refer to the case of Ivan Charalambij, the Romanian canoeist who defected to Montreal last summer. For eight long months there have been all kinds of excuses raised. There are no security implications, but this person has found himself in the last few days still in an uncertain position in which rules change, documents get lost and there is double talk and red tape. There have been eight months of indecision. I am speaking about a person who legitimately seeks refuge here. After eight months is the minister able to say that after all those delays this man will be welcome in Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it is often easy to put the blame for delays on the department rather than on the individuals themselves. As far as my department is concerned, however,

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they feel the delay was not so much caused by them. I have been informed that this person has met the medical requirements and an order in council will authorize that he should be landed.

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● (1450)

NATIONAL GALLERY

POSSIBILITY OF PROCEEDING WITH CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACILITIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State. Now that the jury has returned its verdict about the winning design for the new National Gallery, does the government intend to proceed with the specific architectural drawings and other arrangements for the gallery so that no time will be lost between the preparation of these drawings and the call for tenders a couple of years hence?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the whole question of the future of the gallery will have to be assessed in view of the financial restraint program. No decision has yet been taken to cease the normal progression of events that would occur after this stage. The design which has been presented is an excellent one with which we are extremely pleased. At the present time I have no further comment to make on the situation.

Mr. Fairweather: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I have been informed by the chairman of the National Capital Commission that it is continuing its policy of land acquisition in Hull for the construction of the other museums in the national system. How can the minister reconcile his answer to me with postponing the plans for the National Gallery while going ahead with land acquisition for the museums?

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I did not say we postponed the plans to go ahead with the National Gallery; I said no decision had been taken not to proceed.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ABUSES OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs and involves diplomatic immunity in Canada. According to the Ottawa police, no prosecutions were made on the 4,788 traffic tickets issued to members of the diplomatic community during 1976, and no charges were laid for 13 traffic accidents and 82 traffic violations because diplomatic immunity was involved. Would the minister indicate what measures he has taken to impress upon the abusers of diplomatic status that they have not been given a licence to ignore Canadian law?