

Oral Questions

[English]

REASON FOR FAILURE TO NOTIFY POLICE OF ATTEMPT BY
STATISTICS CANADA EMPLOYEES TO SELL INFORMATION

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): A final supplementary question. That is hardly an answer. In view of the statement also attributed to Mr. Robert Desramaux, assistant chief statistician, in which he says that if those people involved had been compiling their data in the form of estimates and selling them—and that is the issue in this matter—it would be a criminal offence, would the minister inform the House why it was decided not to call in the RCMP directly when this was ascertained, rather than following the practice of allowing a letter to be written by the then chairman of the NCC to the chief civil servant at the time, Mr. Gordon Robertson? Why was the bureaucratic route chosen in this particular matter rather than calling in the RCMP, in view of what has been stated to be the state of the law and if such an offence occurred?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I cannot presume the judgment made at that time by this senior official. I think that the action he took was quite logical and worthwhile and that the hon. member should accept it as something he had to do.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ALLEGATION CANADA SEEKING FRENCH DESIGNED
ICEBREAKER

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. My question arises out of press reports last week which implied that the Canadian government was in fact actively negotiating with French officials with respect to the purchase by Canada of a French designed nuclear powered icebreaker. In reply to a question on the subject from my colleague from Esquimalt-Saanich the minister said that he had not seen the report. Has he now had an opportunity to read through these reports, and can he without any equivocation indicate that the government has no intention of going offshore for the design and construction of ships capable of operation north of 60 degrees?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, may I first of all thank the hon. member for having given me notice. I have not personally seen this news report. I have asked whether anybody else has and perhaps the hon. member would be good enough to let me see a copy of it. I can certainly assure him on the second part of his question that there was no involvement and none is anticipated in regard to the purchase of an icebreaker offshore.

I should like to explain that the situation is that an icebreaker is being designed in Canada. Government officials or perhaps I should say technicians are seeking to determine whether

[Mr. Ouellet.]

or not it will have a conventional power plant or a nuclear power plant. It was in relation to the possibility that a nuclear power plant might be used that the French people made representations regarding provision of that power plant. But no decision has been made as to the kind of power plant that will be used, and that is where the matter rests at the present time.

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TRANSPORT

DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT FOR ICEBREAKER—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): One brief supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that response, particularly in light of the plight in which Canadian shipyards find themselves, or will next year. Might I direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Transport in the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. I should like to ask the minister what particular pressures are being brought to bear by his authorities respecting the development in Canada of the necessary technology to get on with the development of our own nuclear capacity to provide a power plant that we might desire to use in marine vessels north of 60 degrees?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, to this point we have been doing preparatory work on the feasibility of such an icebreaker powered by nuclear power. Until those phases are complete it would be premature to attempt to conclude where the necessary technology could be found.

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CITIZENSHIP ACT

REASON FOR DELAY IN PROCLAIMING ACT AND REGULATIONS

Hon. Stanley Haidasz (Parkdale): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State whether he would inform the House why the delay in proclaiming the New Citizenship Act which was given royal assent last summer, and when publication of the regulations under this new Act may be expected?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I share the hon. member's regret that we have not yet been able to proclaim the Act. The delays are a result of the problem of drafting the regulations and translation. I very much hope that we will be able to proclaim the Act within the month of February.