

Oral Questions

NATIONAL DEFENCE

MARINE SEARCH AND RESCUE—MEASURES TO ENSURE
EFFICIENCY OF ORGANIZATION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport may I direct my question to the Minister of National Defence? As the Minister of Transport in the statement released at eleven o'clock this morning, made the tragic admission that the marine search and rescue organization is no longer entirely adequate; as, so far this year, ten fishermen on the east and west coasts of Canada have lost their lives; and as the special task force report will not be ready for cabinet until mid-1976, may I ask the minister what immediate steps he, as the minister responsible, is taking to ensure the maximum efficiency of the service protecting our fishermen?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, there is a division of responsibility. The Department of National Defence is responsible for the air search, the Department of Transport for the coastal or marine aspect of search and rescue. I cannot comment on the statement my colleague made this morning, because I have not seen it or talked to him.

Mr. McGrath: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The division of responsibility is precisely at the core of the present situation. While the minister is considering spending millions of dollars to purchase equipment from a company in the United States, could he not find a few more extra dollars with which to provide our fishermen protection until the task force report is ready?

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, the long-range patrol aircraft we are buying will help us know the positions of fishing fleets, which is important in search and rescue operations.

REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF CONFLICTING STATEMENTS
ON ADEQUACY OF MARINE SEARCH AND RESCUE
ORGANIZATION

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence. On April 8, 1975, 365 days ago, the minister said in this House, as reported on page 4595 of *Hansard*, that our air-sea rescue facilities were, in his view, adequate. Today, on April 7, 1976, the Minister of Transport said they are inadequate. Is the minister prepared to alter the record? Will he get it straight, please?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I said a moment ago that I was not responding with respect to the responsibilities of the Ministry of Transport, which has a responsibility for the marine side of search and rescue. Many successful rescues have been made involving not only search from the air but by the Department of Transport as well. I was referring to the adequacy of the service in that sense.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister saying that there have been no consultations at all involving those two

[Mr. Paproski.]

departments of government on this important matter? Meanwhile, we are still losing fishermen on both coasts.

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, no, I am not saying that. There have been close and continuing consultations between the Departments of Transport and National Defence on this matter.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY TO CANADIAN LAW—GOVERNMENT
ACTION TO OBTAIN COMPLIANCE

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It arises from his answer to me of Monday, when he told me that in the past year some 5,516 foreign diplomats accused of breaking Canadian laws could not be charged because they invoked diplomatic immunity. As in no case could the charge be considered as harassment preventing the diplomat from discharging official responsibilities in Canada, I ask the minister, what is the government doing to prod recalcitrant governments, presently thumbing their noses at Canadian law, to ask their diplomats to abide by Canadian law and accept responsibility for their actions in Canada?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, obviously, I am familiar with the information made available in response to the hon. member's question. Foreign diplomats in Canada are beneficiaries, so to speak, of diplomatic immunity, and our diplomats in other countries have similar privileges. I believe that diplomats resident in Canada ought to look at this general performance and determine among themselves if there is no way to conform with Canadian practice. We encourage Canadian diplomats abroad to observe the laws of their host countries and not to escape from those laws under the general blanket of immunity.

HABITAT CONFERENCE IN VANCOUVER—MEASURES TO
ENSURE PAYMENT OF HOTEL BILLS BY DELEGATES

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. As many delegates attending the Stockholm conference on the environment, in 1972, left Stockholm without paying their hotel and other bills, what action will the government take to make sure that delegates attending the Habitat conference in Vancouver will not leave the country before paying their hotel and other bills?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that that will be a difficulty with Habitat. I think that guests in Vancouver will, with the assistance of hotel operators, pay their bills.