

*Adjournment Debate*

● (2200)

**PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT  
MOTION***[English]*

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

NATIONAL SECURITY—U.S.S.R. CRUISE SHIP "ODESSA"—  
INQUIRY WHETHER SECURITY CHECKS CONDUCTED

**Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta):** Mr. Speaker, on January 12, I rose in the House wanting to ask the minister in charge of tourism about the policy of the government regarding the activities of a Soviet Union tourist ship, the M.V. *Odessa*, plying the waters off the coast of British Columbia going to Alaska. The minister had to leave the chamber for a minute, so I redirected the question to the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan).

It boggles my mind that we should have a ship under the flag of the Soviet Union exploiting the tourist trade in Canada. Our economy is in trouble. We have thousands of people who are unemployed. The marine industry in our country is hurting. Let us forget politics for just a moment. I am talking about a ship under the flag of the Soviet Union, a country which has a planned economy, arbitrarily establishes wages and prices and which can very arbitrarily under those circumstances assign workers to that ship.

Under those circumstances there is a Soviet ship undercutting our economy. Thousands of people who would like to work in our marine industry cannot because a ship under the flag of the Soviet Union is plying our waters, entertaining our tourists and leaving our people jobless. There is an absurd situation whereby the stewards on the M.V. *Odessa* are serving caviar to the capitalist patrons on the ship, while their countrymen in the Soviet Union are serving rotten cabbage to the gulags. The patrons of the ship are certainly in no gulag. I am sure the brochure I have in my hand will demonstrate that the ship is not for gulags. It is fully colour coded, and it amply demonstrates the sumptuous fare for patrons on that ship. A nation known around the world for oppression at home is now exploiting the tourist trade in Canada. I cannot help but think of the insult this is to many thousands of Canadians whose places of birth are countries dominated by the militaristic regime of the Soviet Union.

In Canada we have an open harbour policy. This ship has freedom to dock in the harbour of Vancouver. It has free access to the facilities at Vancouver. As I understand it, no tourist ship from any other part of the world could go to any harbour in the Soviet Union and have the same access to facilities and the same freedom this ship has in our Canadian ports.

I have asked the Solicitor General what we have done to ensure the security of our Canadian coastline in the event that not all members of the crew of that ship are stewards, or

people in the marine industry, but are perhaps KGB officers. The Solicitor General was quick to reply that he is obliged not to answer questions of that nature because the operations of the security service are not described in this place in the degree of detail I was requesting. I was not really asking for that kind of detail. I want to know what assurance Canadians can have that there is security in Canada, in spite of the fact that that ship is plying Canadian waters. I notice that the map enclosed with this colourful brochure shows this ship hugging the British Columbia coastline, which is unguarded. We only have about two coastguard cutters in Canada, and we have almost no navy. Can the Solicitor General give the assurance—and I am not concerned with detail at the moment—that in fact normal security precautions have been taken?

The Soviet Union would gladly staff that ship with KGB officers. Just three years ago 12 so-called diplomats were dismissed from the Soviet embassy in Ottawa because they were not in fact diplomats. Is it unreasonable to suppose that some of the men and women employed on this particular ship are not in fact regular staff of the ship and have other clandestine duties to perform while serving on that ship?

● (2205)

Canadians deserve the assurance of the government that it has taken all the necessary precautions and that the coastline of British Columbia is being guarded.

**Mrs. Céline Hervieux-Payette (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I answer the question raised by the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen). I shall deal with the security issue raised in the hon. member's question and leave him to ask a question on the matter of tourism of the appropriate minister.

The hon. member asked a question of the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan) on January 12 of this year concerning the Soviet cruise ship M.V. *Odessa* and whether specific national security investigations had been carried out on that Soviet vessel. This question raised a fundamental issue. I believe it is important to remind hon. members of the necessity to reconcile the need for secrecy in the daily operations of an agency such as the RCMP security service with the well-established principle of ministerial accountability to the House. No member of this House would deny the need for a security service to safeguard the internal security of Canada. I also believe that no one could expect such a service to operate effectively with the same degree of public scrutiny and revelation of its operations as other government departments.

Since the nature of the various threats to our internal security are clandestine and covert, whether those threats be sabotage, espionage, terrorism or subversion, it is inconceivable that the security service should be forced to reveal its operations, methods and records in public and yet at the same time be expected to counter domestic security threats. Therefore, when a question is asked of our government, the answer to which would reveal information of value to those who would subvert our democratic system, the minister responsible is