

*Inquiries of the Ministry***THE BUDGET****INQUIRY AS TO PROBABLE DATE
OF PRESENTATION**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance, who has already indicated to the house that he does not intend to present the budget before April 1. Can the hon. gentleman inform the house when we may expect the presentation of the budget?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker. I expect this is a decision which will have to be made by the new prime minister.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**VIET NAM—REPORTED MISTREATMENT OF
PRISONERS AND NON-COMBATANTS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): May I direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Having regard to the films which were shown on C.B.C. television last night depicting ill treatment of prisoners and the suffering which has been occasioned to non-combatants in Viet Nam, I wish to ask the government whether it will consider making representations to all the participants in this barbarous war, particularly to those who, like Canada, are signatories to the international convention regarding the treatment of prisoners and non-combatants, in the hope that these atrocities may be prevented.

Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce): I think in the circumstances all I can do is take the question as notice.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, while an answer is being prepared, as a supplementary question may I ask whether the Canadian government has ascertained through its various channels whether there has been any firm commitment by the government of North Viet Nam to the effect that it is prepared to begin negotiations and consideration of de-escalation of military activities once the bombing of North Viet Nam has ceased?

NATIONAL DEFENCE**REPORTED OPERATION OF RUSSIAN SPY
SHIPS OFF EAST COAST**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to [Mr. Munro.]

the Minister of National Defence. In view of reports that two Soviet spy ships have been operating off Canada's east coast, could the minister advise the house whether these vessels were operating in Canadian or international waters?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): They were operating in what we consider international waters, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Patterson: As a supplementary question, in view of the statement by a United States representative that information on this subject had been transmitted by General Allard, and the fact that General Allard has denied the allegation, is the minister instituting an inquiry to ascertain where the information originated?

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I had a talk this morning with General Allard, and he told me he had never mentioned that the ships were actually approached by Canadian ships, or taken over. That was the implication. A story had been going around, and actually it was accurate, that an Argus aircraft had taken pictures of the ships while they were being refueled by a supply vessel. General Allard has denied that he ever said this, as correctly stated by the hon. member.

**INTERCEPTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF
RUSSIAN BOMBERS**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister of National Defence. Has the minister now determined whether the Russian planes which flew off the coast of Newfoundland flew through commercial air lanes?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): I have not, Mr. Speaker, but I know they were 60 nautical miles off Newfoundland. That is as far as I can go.

Mr. Harkness: In view of the fact that the commercial air lanes extend from Newfoundland to the United Kingdom surely the minister would be in a position to know whether the Russian planes were in these air lanes, thus endangering commercial air traffic.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Cumberland.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. Has the minister looked into