

Oral Questions

Mr. Firth: Mr. Speaker, in view of the same report and a number of others recently which underline the fragile nature of the northern environment, does the minister intend to review the present offshore drilling tests which are now being set up in the Beaufort Sea?

Mr. Buchanan: Mr. Speaker, this particular matter is under continuing review. As a matter of fact, I was there myself in the last three or four weeks and had meetings with people of Inuvik and nearby communities. This is a subject of ongoing review with the people involved.

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FOOD PRICES

**RECOMMENDATION OF FOOD PRICES REVIEW BOARD
CONCERNING FOOD PRICES IN NEWFOUNDLAND—
GOVERNMENT ACTION**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, in his capacity as Acting Minister of Transport, what action if any the government proposes to take on the recommendations contained in the Food Prices Review Board's special study on food prices in Newfoundland?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Acting Minister of Transport): As the hon. member knows, Mr. Speaker, the report was received only in the latter part of last week. I had the opportunity of being briefed on certain sections of it yesterday but I think it would be premature to make any declaration of intent at this time, other than to say it will receive serious consideration.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**CONFINEMENT OF VALENTYN MOROZ BY RUSSIANS—
GOVERNMENT ACTION TO DETERMINE HEALTH CONDITION**

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I directed a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs concerning Valentyn Moroz. The minister replied that he had spoken to Mr. Gromyko who had assured him that as far as he was concerned, with the knowledge he had, Mr. Moroz was receiving fair treatment and was in the hospital. In the last three or four days, with indomitable spirit, Mr. Sakharov, a world famous physicist, who was in touch with representatives of the *Toronto Star*, spoke out when he was asked about the condition of Moroz saying he was in solitary confinement, was hemorrhaging to such an extent that his life will be immeasurably shortened, because of bleeding as a result of his being forced fed. In view of Mr. Sakharov's statement, and it takes courage to express the views he has, I should like to ask the minister what the government is going to do concerning this man?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): As the right hon. gentleman stated, Mr. Speaker, this matter concerning Mr. Moroz's health was raised by me with the Soviet foreign minister on Septem-

[Mr. Buchanan.]

ber 25. I think it is worthwhile repeating the information that was conveyed by Mr. Gromyko, to the effect that Mr. Moroz's health was satisfactory in all respects. Tests had been taken, Mr. Gromyko stated, of his heartbeat, blood and so on, and all were normal. He added that Mr. Moroz was under permanent medical observation, that at present he had no complaint concerning his health. Mr. Gromyko also added that Mr. Moroz took exercise regularly.

● (1440)

Now, may I say to the right hon. gentleman that since that time I have noticed, as he has, reports to the effect that Mr. Moroz's health is deteriorating, and that has caused me considerable concern. I have asked that the matter be raised with the Soviet authorities and that an updating on the reports which had been given by Mr. Gromyko be sought. I intend to pursue that further.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Time is somewhat of the essence. Since September this man has apparently lost a great deal of weight; he is virtually physically impotent. The offhand way in which the minister answers this question, by saying that they are just going to ask for a further report, is too pusillanimous for a situation such as this. I ask him whether he will inquire if the Canadian embassy in Moscow has the right to see this man, because anything short of that is far removed from the kind of treatment that any person should receive for no offence other than that he had spoken his mind, as the constitution of the U.S.S.R. permits him to do, a right also assured to people in various states by membership of the U.S.S.R. in the United Nations. Surely the time has come to stop pussyfooting and speak out. Will the minister not give that assurance?

Mr. MacEachen: I can give the assurance that the Canadian government has taken this matter very seriously.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I can see that.

Mr. MacEachen: The health of Mr. Moroz has been raised by the Prime Minister with Mr. Kosygin, by my predecessor with Mr. Gromyko, and by myself just recently. We intend to continue that effort on a humanitarian basis. The right hon. gentleman knows that there is a limit to the influence and effectiveness that one can have on the present situation. It may be that the course of action which the right hon. gentleman recommends, which may catch the headlines, may have a very unfortunate effect in reaching the objective that we both have in mind.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: If there is one thing that the minister and other members of this government abhor, it is the headlines. We have seen evidence of that in the last 24 hours. I ask the minister: why is no action taken, why does he not speak up? Why is he so silent? Why will the Prime Minister, with all his courage, not speak up with the authority he has?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!