

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Forestry. The Canada-Quebec forest development subsidiary agreement is due to expire on March 31, 1990.

Can the minister tell us whether he intends to renew this agreement and whether he will promote private woodlots, keeping in mind that there are 120,000 private woodlot owners in Quebec and that they supply 21 per cent of lumber used in processing plants?

[English]

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, it is true that the agreement on forest renewal is expiring at the end of this fiscal year, and we can point to very impressive results. Naturally, we would be inclined to renew the agreement as expeditiously as possible.

The federal government has always emphasized the restoration and the promotion of private woodlots, and support for the owners of private woodlots as a means of improving and enlarging the wood inventory, not only in the Province of Quebec but throughout Canada. That would be the emphasis we would place on a new agreement as well.

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ETHIOPIA

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

I would like to ask the minister what is the role for Canada regarding the war in Ethiopia. There are millions of people who are suffering as a result of the war. Are there any initiatives being taken by Canada to speak to each of the sides in the war to bring a resolution to problems that have existed there for decades?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Canada, along with other countries, has been seeking any means open to us to try to influence that situation, so far without success. We are continuing those efforts.

One initiative that has been undertaken as a result of an informal meeting of members of all parties of this House interested in the proposal, is that we are exploring the possibility of putting together a delegation of parliamentarians from the Parliaments of Canada, the United States, the Soviet Union and Italy to see if they might be able to have some impact on the situation.

The informal committee of parliamentarians that met here suggested that I ask the hon. member for Rosedale, who was a former ambassador to Ethiopia, to undertake that action on behalf of Canada. He has been in touch with the chairman of the United States congressional committee on hunger and is in touch with representatives of both the Soviet Union and Italy.

We hope that group can be formed and that it might have some success in an area where governments so far have been unable to achieve a breakthrough.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question either for the Deputy Prime Minister or maybe the minister from Newfoundland.

I wrote their colleague, the Minister of Energy, a few days ago to alert him to the environmental and economic time bomb which is ticking away off the Newfoundland coast where PetroCan is doing wildcat exploration without the benefit of a back-up rig to drill a relief well in the event of a blow out, and without any capability to clean up the mess if it does occur.

An oil industry report today confirms the worst fears that I stated in that letter. I want to ask the minister this. What guarantee can the government give us that the richest fishing grounds in the north Atlantic will not be wiped out, will not be at undue risk by the current situation as I have described it?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, if you will permit me to answer on behalf of the Minister of the Environment on this particular issue, the licences and the approvals for drilling offshore Newfoundland and off the east coast are managed by the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board.