

been given a very broad mandate indeed. It wants to demonstrate great care and concern for those affected by the offshore drilling operations.

I would remind my hon. friend that the investigations to which he is referring are internal investigations of the existing United States agencies. It is obviously much easier and faster to set up such investigations than a joint inquiry of the type we are setting up. As I said, our inquiry has a much broader mandate. However, there is work being done, both by the companies concerned and by agencies of the Government of Canada, in gathering evidence and carrying out studies to be made available to the commission as soon as the commission requests the information.

Concerning the presence of observers before the United States agencies, I am not in a position to advise my friend as to whether there is an observer today or not. However, we have held meetings with the United States agencies concerned, and they have agreed to co-operate with us fully in all respects and to make all their information available to us. We have also agreed to help them in their investigation.

That is as much as I can say. However, Madam Speaker, if my answer was long, the question was just as long.

REQUEST THAT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CONDUCT
INQUIRY

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is to the same minister. The *Ocean Ranger* was owned by a U.S. company, but the accident occurred on the Canadian continental shelf. Eighty-two people died in the tragedy, 52 of whom were Canadians, 26 from the district of St. John's West alone. Therefore, I put it to the minister that it is shameful that we have not received any public information concerning the cause of this accident. All of our information comes from the United States, not from private, internal inquiries, but from a congressional hearing, and from a public hearing which is going on today.

I would ask the minister, why not have a committee of this House investigate the matter? It is time that this House ceased to be a eunuch and that it had some function and some purpose. Why not at least have a committee of this House make some initial inquiries of the Canadian authorities into what they consider the causes of this tragedy to be? Would he agree to that so that we do not have to wait two, three or four years for a royal commission report such as the McDonald Commission undertook? Would the government consider that?

Will the minister tell the House whether we have made any changes in our regulations or requirements with respect to offshore safety since that accident occurred? Has the government undertaken its own internal inquiries, and have they resulted in changes and more precautions being taken?

I know that it is a long question, but this is a serious matter.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): It is certainly a very serious matter and one to

which the government and I attach much importance. If my hon. friend feels like a eunuch, I think that is his problem.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: I do not think that it is a problem which is shared by other members of this Parliament.

Mr. Crosbie: This House is a eunuch.

Mr. Lalonde: As far as the specific questions he has raised are concerned, I want to tell him that steps are indeed being taken. As he knows, the two other offshore rigs which were on the Hibernia field have been brought ashore for full inspection, and the federal agency responsible for the administration of the Canada lands imposed very high and stiff standards and requirements before those rigs were allowed to explore again. The companies have agreed to that, and the government of Newfoundland has also agreed to those particular measures we have taken to ensure the safety of people on board.

As far as the suggestion of the hon. member is concerned, I would suggest to him that we should allow the royal commission, which is a completely independent one, representing both governments, to do its work independently and freely. What is important is that the Canadian public, and the people of Newfoundland in particular, be assured that there will be non-partisan, objective and complete examination of this situation and that they will be presented with all of the facts. It is important that they be fully satisfied they have the full story and that no partisanship was exhibited concerning this tragedy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FINANCE

DRAFTING OF TAXATION LEGISLATION

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if it is true that the chief draftsman for the Income Tax Act in the Department of Justice has left his post and that the taxation legislation which was to be due in May or June will not be ready for us until November.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have no information on that point at all.

Mr. Huntington: It is rather surprising that the Minister of Finance would not be aware of this and that he cannot confirm the situation.

REQUEST THAT BUDGET BE WITHDRAWN

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, I am wondering whether the Minister of Finance is aware of the number of capital projects which are on hold in this country,