

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

right hon. gentleman now inform the House whether or not the government and governments generally accept the position taken by the government of Nova Scotia that all of the potential royalties from the oil that it has been announced has been discovered on Sable Island in fact belong to the province of Nova Scotia?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** I missed the question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Then may I repeat it. Would the Prime Minister indicate whether or not his government accepts the position taken by the province of Nova Scotia that the royalties from the oil and gas discovery on Sable Island do in fact belong to the province of Nova Scotia?

**Mr. Trudeau:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Can I conclude from the Prime Minister's reply that the premier of the province of Nova Scotia is talking through his hat when he says that—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

**Mr. E. B. Osler (Winnipeg South Centre):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware that under section 91(9), I believe it is, of the British North America Act, lighthouses and a few other things, including Sable Island, are the property of the Dominion of Canada—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Coates:** Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister inform the House who is assuming the responsibilities of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources during the minister's sickness?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is the acting minister and he is present today.

STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH PROVINCES ON  
OFFSHORE MINERAL RIGHTS—FEDERAL POSITION  
RESPECTING SABLE ISLAND

**Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North):** Mr. Speaker, will the Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources inform the House whether negotiations are going forward between the governments of Nova Scotia and Canada in respect of offshore mineral rights, and will he indicate exactly what the attitude of the federal government is with regard to the status of Sable Island?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that these discussions started in December, 1968, and they have been going on since.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Coates:** I have a supplementary question.

**An hon. Member:** Just like everything else.

**Mr. Coates:** In view of the fact that the Premier of Nova Scotia has stated Sable Island is part of Nova Scotia, I am

[Mr. Forrestall.]

wondering what the exact attitude of the federal government is in respect of this question?

**Mr. Pepin:** Mr. Speaker, I referred to December, 1968, because at that time an offer was made to the provinces generally and discussions have been going on since. I think the position of the federal government in respect of Sable Island is the same as that indicated by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre who a moment ago quoted the British North America Act on the subject.

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister whether the position of the federal government with regard to offshore minerals is precisely as announced back in 1968 by the Prime Minister, or has that position been modified in any respect as a result of discussions? Could the minister indicate very briefly what the federal government's present position is and, if he cannot do that briefly, will he make a statement at a very early date indicating precisely what the federal government's present position is with regard to offshore mineral rights?

**Mr. Pepin:** Mr. Speaker, it is fairly obvious that the hon. member regrets he did not stay in his last job longer. He would know all about these things if he had remained as the head of the government of the province of Nova Scotia.

**Mr. Stanfield:** It is pretty obvious you do not want to answer the question.

**Mr. Pepin:** Discussions are going on, Mr. Speaker, and we hope that a conclusion will be reached.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I take it from what the minister has said that he refuses to make a statement as to the current position of the federal Government in respect of offshore mineral rights.

**An hon. Member:** How about heavy water?

**Mr. Stanfield:** How about it? Come on now, answer.

**Mr. Coates:** On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I understand the hon. member is rising on a question of privilege. I might suggest that before we have further supplementary questions on this point the Chair should recognize the hon. member for Témiscamingue as we have not yet completed the first round of questioning. For the moment we will hear the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North.

**Mr. Coates:** Mr. Speaker, members of this House and the people of the country, especially those in the province of Nova Scotia, are being told a story by the Premier of Nova Scotia in respect of offshore mineral rights, but when we come into this House and ask questions about the position of the federal government we are told nothing at all. We are given the runaround. The people of Nova Scotia deserve to know exactly what the federal government's position is, and we have every right to expect the acting minister to provide us with an answer now.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!