

Oral Questions

ignoring the fact that there has been an increase in derailments. Would he consider setting up immediately a public inquiry into rail safety so that we can uncover some of these facts, and freeze all lay-offs relating to railway workers, pending the outcome of such investigation?

• (1450)

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend should be aware that about a year and a half ago this House passed the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act. Since then—and I will provide the hon. member with all of the information he needs to have—a tremendous effort has been made at both federal and provincial levels with regard to the development of inspection, and what not, to help increase the degree of safety in the transportation of dangerous goods.

A year or so ago the Grange inquiry took place and reported to this House. Some days ago I reported on the progress that has been made since the publication of the Grange report. Therefore I would be very pleased, either in debate or in a personal conversation with the hon. member, to inform him of progress that has been made in this area of safety, both in rail and air transportation. The provinces presumably, are working very hard on highway safety.

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FISHERIES**CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING ARREST OF FRENCH TRAWLERS**

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It relates to an answer which the minister gave yesterday concerning the impounding of French trawlers. Aside from the conflict between the evidence put on the record yesterday by the minister about overfishing and the fact that the logs and the contents in the holds did not correspond, which led to the eventual charge of obstructing a fisheries protection officer, would the minister say whether these particular charges were laid because the trawlers were fishing in what we consider to be Canadian waters, but what the French consider to be their waters?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I may have left that impression yesterday, and indeed I am not sure that I was entirely clear in my own mind as to whether the occurrence was in disputed waters or undisputed waters, but I have since been informed that the waters in which the ships were stopped were undisputed Canadian waters. Therefore, the boundary dispute involving Canada and France over St. Pierre-Miquelon does not really form part of this particular problem.

The problem discovered by Canadian fishery officials was in the so-called conversion factor converting—

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Pounds to kilos.

Mr. MacGuigan:—not pounds to kilos as the hon. member suggests, but converting the fish into round weight figures. Our fisheries officials were of the opinion that the conversion factor was too low and that the log books of the ships underestimated the weight of the fish taken and therefore were infringing our regulations.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, that is a very fishy story to me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST FOR PRODUCTION OF CHART SHOWING FRENCH JURISDICTIONAL CLAIMS

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, since this was not a matter of disputed or undisputed waters, would the minister be prepared to produce a chart showing the claims of the French government in the Gulf of St. Lawrence over what we consider to be Canadian waters?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I am not sure whether there is a single French claim, in that the 200-mile zone in some directions conflicts with the Newfoundland mainland. I think it can take different shapes. However, I will undertake to discuss this matter with the hon. member outside of the House to try to fully acquaint him with the facts.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): How about right here?

Mr. MacGuigan: The hon. member says he would like it right here but I am not sure in what form I would present it to the House. May I discuss this with the hon. member and, if we can agree on a form in which it can be presented to the House, I would be pleased to do that.

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GARRISON DIVERSION**UNITED STATES FIRST PHASE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): I wish to direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs also. On February 24, in discussions between Canadian and American officials over the Garrison diversion project, a proposal was advanced by United States delegates, who basically put forward irrigating lands in South Dakota and limiting the development of the Garrison proposal in North Dakota to areas within the Missouri River basin as a first phase development. What has Canada's reaction been to this proposal? Could the Secretary of State for External Affairs indicate the kind of follow-up that Canada is having with the United State concerning this proposal?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I believe the proposals to which the