

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

STEPS TO PROTECT OFFSHORE WATERS FROM EFFECTS OF DEEP-SEA MINING

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Fisheries and I gave him notice of it. I understand that in his absence his parliamentary secretary is prepared to answer it. With the advent of ocean mining, and particularly the international development of the continuous line bucket system for dragging metalliferous nodules from the ocean floor, what steps is the department taking to protect our offshore environment in view of the likelihood of an international race commencing shortly?

Mr. Speaker: The parliamentary secretary may reply to the question briefly. The question is a far-ranging one and would normally invite a statement on motions. If the parliamentary secretary can reply briefly, he will be recognized for that purpose.

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, a continuous line bucket system for deep sea mining is under development in the Pacific Ocean, primarily by Japanese and American interests. The earliest date for first full-scale operation is 1975, although this is considered optimistic. No significant nodule deposits are known to exist on the Canadian continental shelf or in waters where the federal government has direct jurisdiction.

• (1150)

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DEFENCE RESEARCH BOARD

PROVISION OF FUNDS TO EXPLOIT BREAKTHROUGH IN GAS LASER TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. It has recently been announced that the Defence Research Board has achieved a significant breakthrough in gas laser technology and it has been indicated that approximately half a million dollars would need to be allocated to the project in order to fully exploit the breakthrough. Has the minister given consideration to the allocation of these funds, and what is his decision?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the Defence Research Board comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Rowland: Mr. Speaker, may I redirect the question to the Minister of National Defence?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Defence Research Board itself decides on how it is going to allocate its funds each year for various projects. Of course, research into lasers has been a major undertaking of the Defence Research Board and I believe it is going to be in the future.

Inquiries of the Ministry

POST OFFICE

ALLEGED ORDER FORBIDDING UNION MEETINGS ON FEDERAL PROPERTY

Mr. Lee Grills (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the President of the Treasury Board. I have been informed directly by the chairman of the local of the Letter Carriers Union in my riding that an order has been issued by Treasury Board through the Department of Public Works that no more postal union meetings are to be held on federal property. Is this a general policy across the country or is this just an isolated case?

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that Treasury Board or the Department of Public Works would issue instructions in relation to postal unions which would clearly hamper the rights of free collective bargaining.

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): I have a supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board. Would this order be related to his continuing silence on current negotiations with the postal unions?

Mr. Drury: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette on a point of order.

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, may I first reply to the Prime Minister that I was in the House yesterday when the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development answered questions, but as he did not answer some questions concerning the James Bay project, I simply asked him whether he was amenable to representations made by the Indians for an immediate stop of this project, to which the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has never replied clearly.

So, I call upon the Prime Minister to say whether he would favour co-operating with the James Bay project, as I think he would.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has simply repeated the question that he asked during the question period. This period now being over, perhaps the hon. member for Joliette will have an opportunity to ask his question at another occasion or another day.