

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

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### ENERGY

#### JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTE OVER OFFSHORE RESOURCES— MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Madam Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43. It is sadly ironic that only a few days after the breakdown of Newfoundland-Ottawa negotiations over the management, control and jurisdiction of Hibernia offshore oil, we now see tragedy in the apparent sinking of the Mobil Oil rig *Ocean Ranger* in cruel seas 175 miles east of St. John's, Newfoundland. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Kootenay East-Revelstoke (Mr. Parker):

That in order for people not to be at risk because of government jurisdictional disputes, and in order not to repeat the economic consequences of another Alberta-Ottawa type delay, and in view of the fact that the same problem has recently heated up on the west coast off British Columbia, this House urge an early meeting of Premiers Peckford, Buchanan and Bennett with the Prime Minister to negotiate in the spirit of co-operative federalism and end this dangerous dispute.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

● (1415)

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

#### DISASTERS

##### SINKING OF "OCEAN RANGER" DRILLING RIG OFF NEWFOUNDLAND

**Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants):** Madam Speaker, I have given the Minister of Transport notice of my question. Would the minister please give us an up-to-date status report on the Hibernia tragedy?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, the news I have is as of eleven o'clock this morning. The situation was that there was no sign of the rig. Eighty-four persons were not accounted for. Some were seen, apparently, in the water, but it is not known if they are still alive. On the scene there is an Aurora aircraft and two offshore supply vessels. Two other vessels are on the way, and so on. One coastguard ship, the *Humphrey Gilbert*, is there. Two national defence helicopters are operating from adjacent drill rigs. Two lifeboats have been spotted, one capsized and one submerged,

#### Oral Questions

and one partially collapsed life raft has been seen. That was the situation as of eleven o'clock.

An investigation is already under way. A fact-finding preliminary inquiry team is there. It is made up of officials from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and Transport Canada. Jointly this afternoon the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and I will be announcing a formal commission of inquiry into this very sad matter.

#### REFUSAL TO BUILD HELICOPTER PAD

**Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants):** Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for that information, tragic though it is. In view of the last part of his answer perhaps the minister would confirm that as part of the investigation and the formal inquiry it will be determined why the Virgin Rocks project, submitted over two years ago by the regional managers and the coast guard director of Newfoundland, for the establishment of a safety fuelled light station, a heli-pad and a medical supply station, was turned down by the minister's department because it was too "futuristic", notwithstanding the fact that there is such a safety heli-pad in the North Sea?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, when an accident like this takes place, there is a lot of hindsight. I will look into this particular matter. Each time there is an inquiry, such an inquiry leads to a number of recommendations and, as far as the Department of Transport is concerned, there is a formal response to each recommendation made. If the matter raised by my hon. friend was the object of a recommendation from an inquiry, judge or otherwise, I am sure a response was provided at that time. I will look into this and make sure the hon. member is made aware of the reasons why action along the line he has indicated was not taken.

#### REQUEST FOR REPORT ON REASONS FOR REFUSAL

**Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants):** Madam Speaker, just so that we are very clear, there has never been a formal inquiry on the Virgin Rocks project. The project emanated from within the department. There was a recommendation from the Newfoundland Coast Guard to officials in Ottawa, and I am informed the recommendation was turned down by the ministry on October 2, 1980.

Would the minister please report back to the House even before there is some official inquiry into this tragedy as to the reasons why this recommendation for a heli-pad and medical supply station on the Virgin Rocks, which is half way between St. John's and the Hibernia—and recommended just for the prevention of loss from such a tragedy as this—was in fact turned down?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** I will do so, Madam Speaker. I was just trying to make the point that every time there is an accident of this kind—we all truly regret it—people have ideas about what should have been done to