

*Oral Questions***ENERGY**AGREEMENT WITH NOVA SCOTIA ON DEVELOPMENT OF
OFFSHORE RESOURCES

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It concerns the very significant energy agreement between the federal government and the province of Nova Scotia. I would like to ask the minister if he could elaborate on certain points regarding this agreement, in particular the duration of this agreement, where does this exactly leave the question of ownership of the offshore, resources, and whether this same type of agreement is available to the province of Newfoundland.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Nova Scotia have signed today a long-term offshore agreement on offshore resources development, offshore Nova Scotia. This agreement is for an indefinite period, but will last at least until the year 2024. It provides for very generous revenue sharing and for a real participation by the government of Nova Scotia in regard to those offshore resources. That agreement obviously is available to the province of Newfoundland also, and we would be willing and ready to sign the same type of agreement with the province of Newfoundland tomorrow, if the government of Newfoundland wished to do so.

* * *

RAILWAYS

LEAKING TANK CARS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. On Friday last I raised with the minister the fact that there were 28 tank cars in the Hamilton yards that were leaking a variety of different toxic and flammable substances. I want to suggest to the minister that that number has been raised now from 28 to 74, that between the months of October and December an additional 46 tank cars were found to be leaking, and in every case the leaks were discovered as the result of mechanical work being done on tank cars. Is it not possible that those tank cars had been leaking all the way from Sarnia to Hamilton through each of the municipalities on the way, and does he not now recognize, as a result of the weekend disaster, that there are many people in jeopardy by the lackadaisical attitude of the CTC?

● (1440)

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I have not yet received a report from the CTC on that subject. I hope to get one very soon.

REQUEST FOR TABLING OF INSPECTION REPORTS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he is prepared to table all the investigations that have taken place, all of the work records that have been undertaken, and all of the testing that was done, both at the source and along the way, on every single tank car which travelled on that train which travels from Sarnia to Hamilton to Nanticoke. Will he explain how it is possible that an adequate inspection procedure can be carried out, given the tremendous number of people who have been laid off by the CNR and CPR, the result of which obviously means that there are not a sufficient number of people employed to do the work?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will indeed give consideration to that suggestion. On the other subject which the hon. member had been recommending, in recent days, that is the addition of a substantial number of people to inspect railway cars, I have had this suggestion analysed. Hon. members might recall that yesterday I indicated how the inspection of cars takes place. I indicated that it is done a number of times, by the shipper, by the railways, and by the receiver of the goods. I have had estimated the consequences of one of these suggestions which the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain has been making to the press. For example, the complete mechanical inspection of all railway cars twice a year would require approximately 1,300 people, or person-years at the CTC. That would only be part of the examination, the examination of the car itself. Presumably my hon. friend would also like us to start examining the tracks, the crossings, the operators, etc. There might be more examiners at the end of the exercise than cars to be examined.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

FORECAST OF HIGHER FUND DEFICIT

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Yesterday the minister confirmed that the November budget forecast on the unemployment insurance fund deficit was wrong, that the deficit may be much higher than the \$218 million predicted. The deficit of \$218 million was based on an unemployment forecast for 1982 of 7.8 per cent. Can the minister tell the House what the revised unemployment rate is?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I would like to clarify for the hon. member that my only indication at the time was that we would have to see what the revised figures would be according to our quarterly estimates of what the actual draw was on the unemployment insurance fund. It is obviously a revolving fund and has to keep pace with current conditions. It should come