

Oral Questions

in particular, Texaco will not be allowed to drill on the Georges Bank?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, there is at present in place a process for reviewing proposals by companies such as Texaco. The Government, and myself in particular, have said repeatedly that no such drilling will be authorized by myself should it in any way jeopardize the interests of fishermen in view of the very precious resources on the Georges Bank on which they depend.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, we know that when it came to standing up for the fishermen in Newfoundland in the Canada-France deal the Government caved in to France. We now know that when it comes to standing up for the fishermen in Nova Scotia the Government is prepared to cave in to multinational corporate interests in the United States.

Will the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans give a clear and unequivocal commitment today that there will be no drilling whatsoever and that he will communicate to Texaco and the Nova Scotia Government the decision that there shall not and must not be any drilling on the Georges Bank?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the impatience of the Hon. Member. I wonder where he was when his Party was in government and many initiatives were taken and agreements signed such as one with France which impaired in perpetuity the interests of the fishermen in Atlantic Canada. He should not try to set an example in matters of this nature.

The Government has taken strong and vigilant initiatives to protect and enhance the fishery and the economic benefit which it has brought to his province and to Atlantic Canada since the Government took office.

Mr. Dingwall: You're a wimp.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VISITS BY NUCLEAR POWERED VESSELS TO ESQUIMALT

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. This morning Professor Jackson Davis released results of a study commissioned by Greenpeace, Operation Dismantle, Canadian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and the Greater Victoria Disarmament Group on the effects of a possible accident resulting from the visit of a nuclear powered or nuclear armed vessel to Esquimalt. Plutonium concentrations of up to 10,000 times acceptable limits would be carried through the Greater Victoria area with up to 3,400 latent cancer deaths resulting.

In view of these disastrous consequences—even though the probability of such an accident is low—will the Government hold a public inquiry weighing the benefits of visits to Canadian ports by nuclear powered or armed vessels against the possible disastrous consequences of such visits?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Hon. Member allow me to take that question as notice. I will certainly take his representation into consideration and perhaps the Secretary of State for External Affairs, when he returns to the House tomorrow, might be able to respond to it more fully.

RESULTS OF GOVERNMENT INQUIRY

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I will direct my supplementary question to the Deputy Prime Minister. Will the Government at least release the results and details of its own inquiry into the safety aspects of such visits to Canadian ports? Will it make public the evacuation plans which are supposed to be followed in the event of such a disaster?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I will certainly bring this to the attention of the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

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ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

FEDERAL FUNDING

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I will direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister. Last June, during a by-election in St. John's, Newfoundland, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and promised \$1 billion in new funding for that agency over five years. This week the President of the Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce called into question the Prime Minister's commitment not to shelve existing programs to pay for the new Atlantic agency.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister assure the House today that the Industrial Regional Development Program will not be eliminated, shelved, or scaled down when its current mandate expires on March 31? Will he further assure the House that the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency will indeed be funded by new money rather than a reallocation of existing regional development funds?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this is a case of anticipatory crocodile tears by the hon. gentleman who seizes on a rumour to place a question in the House, as is the usual practice of the Opposition.