

greatest danger for offshore operations. That commenced last year under the aegis of this Government.

For years, when we were in opposition in the House, our protests and cries that the search and rescue facilities in Newfoundland were inadequate were completely ignored by the Government of the day, which is the Government to which the Hon. Member belonged. There have already been considerable improvements brought about in search and rescue for the offshore just through the stationing of helicopters in the St. John's area in the winter-time. They are not in Gander or Prince Edward Island or Halifax or some areas where it will take them hours to get to the scene of the trouble, if trouble occurs. Although more improvement is needed, there has already been a great deal of improvement in that direction. Better equipped helicopters, reflecting the latest state-of-the-art technology, are needed in this location, certainly during the winter period but preferably all year.

I do not intend to make a lengthy intervention here today, except to say that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) is well aware of these problems. He has done more in his few short months as Minister of Transport to overcome transportation problems in Newfoundland and elsewhere than any other in our history. He only had eight months in his last incarnation. He has had 13 months so far, this time. He is well aware of the problems and well aware, as far as his jurisdiction is concerned, of what must be done to overcome these problems. As long as we have a person of his calibre and interest occupying this position, we do not need to worry about what will happen to the *Ocean Ranger* report. That report will be implemented and any aspects of it that the Government concludes are not suitable for recommendation will certainly be made public.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I have a comment and then a question. First, let me say that I agree with the Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) that the Minister of Transport is indeed a man unusually possessed with a high degree of intelligence, ability, wisdom and knowledge in this industry. I think he is a man of integrity. I do not question that. It is because I believe he has those qualities that I appeal to him to move more quickly and not wait until next fall with respect to the recommendations contained within the *Ocean Ranger* report.

Let me say with respect to the Member for St. John's West, that I agree with just about everything he said with the exception of his comments about the bung-hole. Even though I agree with everything he said, I tremble somewhat in fear because I am expecting a retraction to be issued at any moment. I do not know if he cleared those comments with the PMO first.

The Hon. Member said that conditions were not as good as they should have been in 1982 when the previous Government was in power. He is right. They were not. If the Hon. Member checks the record in *Hansard* for 1982 and 1983, or checks the public record as far as press clippings are concerned in Newfoundland, he will find that that is exactly what I was saying as a Member of the Government about the provisions made by

Canada Shipping Act

the Government in 1982 and 1983. They were not good enough.

I recall that one of the most disturbing incidents at that time was that two levels of Government were having a political fight about safety regulations while the rigs were operating. One Government threatened to close down the drilling season while the federal Government said it would not allow that to be done. It was a political football that was being kicked back and forth in a very partisan way. If the Hon. Member checks the record, he will see that I was asking at that time for an interim report from the royal commission. In fact, I asked questions in the House of the Minister of Transport as well as in public through the press for an interim report so that we could resolve at least some question of safety rather than let the matter become nothing but a political football.

If the Hon. Member for St. John's West is consistent he will check the record and find that out. The fact of the matter is that we did not have a report in 1982 or 1983. However, since August, 1984, we have had the most exhaustive report of a royal commission. The fact that it was not available before is not an excuse for the past. It does not forgive inaction by Governments of any stripe, including Liberal, if there was inaction in past years. However, we never had a report.

The fact that we have that report now is why I ask the Minister of Transport to take this opportunity to encompass within Bill C-75 the recommendations of the royal commission, particularly as it affects his jurisdiction under the Canada Shipping Act to police the operation of these rigs when they are stationary and at sea.

I ask the Member for St. John's West, in good faith, if he is satisfied that the temporary stationing of the helicopter from Gander meets the specific recommendation of the royal commission. Is he satisfied with that as the Member for St. John's West and, more important, as a Newfoundland Cabinet Minister?

Second, will he tell us whether any initiative is under way by the Government to examine what new types of equipment with respect to SAR helicopters might be more appropriate for this kind of offshore duty than the aircraft that is currently being used? There is wide ranging debate as to whether or not this current vehicle is appropriate for the conditions offshore.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I do not know about retractions. I never recall having retracted anything that I have said, not even in recent days. Therefore, I am not familiar at all with retractions. I do not know what the Hon. Member is referring to in that respect.

Perhaps the hon. gentleman was being accurate. I will have to accept his word for it if he says that in 1982 and 1983 he went on the record as to the need for improvements in offshore search and rescue capabilities and other needs in Newfoundland.

I also remember that he was aiding and abetting the then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who is now the External Affairs critic for the Official Opposition, in his efforts to crush the province and force it to submit to the