

per cent of trains are actually running without cabooses because of the way States have jurisdiction over transportation and the way collective bargaining is involved in the issue.

What would happen here, when this industry is primarily federal, if the CTC were to decide to allow cabooseless trains is that we would have, *carte blanche*, cabooseless trains running from one end of the country to the other on the basis of limited American experience and other arguments that the railways have made which fail to take into account the need for the human touch when it comes to safety on trains running through Canada.

I hope the CTC will make the right decision, not the wrong one, and forbid the running of cabooseless trains.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S ISSUANCE OF PERMITS TO DRILL FOR OIL AND GAS IN CANADIAN WATERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. At my request, the Members of Parliament for Gander—Twillingate and Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe have consulted with officials at External Affairs, and indeed with French officials in Paris, and have confirmed that the Government of France has issued permits to two giant French oil companies—Elf Aquitaine and Total—to drill for oil and gas in over 20,000 square kilometres of Canadian waters.

In response to the investigation of my two Members, the Department of External Affairs this morning issued a weak-kneed protest.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that the Prime Minister was aware of what was happening when the President of France was in the country last month, and why did he not raise a claim for Canadian sovereignty and protest this matter with the President of France when he was in the country?

● (1420)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition is correct. We have been advised that the French Government has granted joint exploration permits to two French companies to explore for oil off the coast of St. Pierre-Miquelon. Instructions have been issued to the Canadian Ambassador to protest the granting of these permits.

I should say as well, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure the Right Hon. Member is aware, that under both Canadian law and international law activities related to the exploration and exploitation of resources on the Canadian shelf may be undertaken only with the express authority of the Canadian Government.

Oral Questions

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, if the Deputy Prime Minister takes the time to read what the Canadian Government sent to France this morning, he will recognize that it was a mealy-mouthed weak-kneed protest.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Having sold out our East Coast fishermen, the Government is now selling out East Coast oil and gas workers.

CANADIAN POSITION—REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER PROTEST

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): I will put my question in terms that will get the point right home to the Deputy Prime Minister. Why didn't the Prime Minister of our country tell the President of France that France has no more right drilling off the coast of Newfoundland than it has to drilling rights in the Province of Alberta? Why hasn't that message been delivered?

Would the Deputy Prime Minister relay a message directly from this Parliament to the Prime Minister in Venice to say to President Mitterrand, when he is sitting across the table from him, to stop that unlawful drilling in Canadian waters?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition is advocating the same kind of gunboat diplomacy as the New Democratic Party. His rhetoric is sounding almost as shrill. I might remind the Right Hon. Member that last year, in October, 1986, a similar application was made and Canada did protest. No drilling was taking place at that particular time.

Ms. Copps: They really listened, eh?

Mr. Mazankowski: In reply to the latter part of the Hon. Member's question, my understanding is that the Prime Minister did meet with Prime Minister Chirac earlier this day. I have not had a report on the outcome of that meeting but I am sure that that will be forthcoming and I am also sure that this matter would have been raised.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I am not going to be diverted by the Deputy Prime Minister. We are not advocating gunboat diplomacy. We are advocating that this Government stand up for Canada's rights, that it show some guts, some backbone and some forthrightness.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It is absolutely unbelievable that a European nation should pretend to exercise sovereignty rights over our waters while this Government does nothing about it but make a feeble protest.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!