

of the free trade agreement documentation. The minister says she will not pursue this matter any further.

I want to assure the House that the New Democratic Party will pursue this matter further because Canadians want to get to the bottom of this sort of thing.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member will put the question.

**Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing):** The question that I have for the minister, and the one question I think Canadians need to know the answer to is: What was the money paid to Senator Carney for?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, first of all what I said was that I would not pursue this any further under these circumstances. I was referring to the manner in which the question was asked. The amount was paid in recognition that documents that had some value to Ms. Carney had been destroyed. The value was determined independently on the basis of the value of other documents within the National Archives.

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## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Garth Turner (Halton—Peel):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week there was a conference here in Ottawa on the effect of putting property rights in the Constitution. The issue of environmental protection was raised.

I want to ask a question of the Minister of the Environment. In his opinion, does the entrenching of property rights in the Constitution in any way threaten existing environmental legislation? Will the right to own property give the right to pollute it?

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to advise the hon. member and the minister that that is asking for a legal opinion and it is not appropriate. If the minister wants to give his comment he can.

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment):** I will be very happy to offer a comment, Mr. Speaker, as you so correctly point out. I would never offer a legal opinion and seek to substitute myself as a judge, as you know.

## Oral Questions

This is an important issue in regard to the environment because it has been brought up as a concern.

Let me first state the fact that the federal government's intent in regard to constitutional proposals is not to diminish our role in the area of the environment. Quite the contrary, we look upon these constitutional proposals as an opportunity to clarify some roles and establish some working principles.

• (1200 )

In the area of property rights, I have been a bit concerned about some remarks by some people who seem to indicate or think that because there would be property rights that in itself would negate the possibility for a government to legislate or produce regulations in the area of the environment.

As far as we know that is not the case. Rights do not exist on and upon themselves. They do not exist in a vacuum. They exist in the historical, social and economic context and it should be viewed in that way.

That being said, we look forward to comments that will be made by people who are concerned about this in the context of the committee or the Standing Committee on the Environment.

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## NUCLEAR VESSELS

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

On Wednesday cabinet consented to U.S. submarines to transit internal Canadian waters at Dixon Entrance effective October 30, 1991.

Would the minister advise this House whether there have been submerged U.S. submarine transits of Dixon Entrance in the past two years and, if there have been, has the public been informed? Under what form has Canadian government consent been given to such transits?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy to double check the information that is at my disposal.

My understanding is no, but I am quite prepared to look into it and let the member know.