

stand that one or two tankers a day go south, and at times they travel within 15 miles of the Canadian shore.

● (1500)

My question is this: Since this accident took place, what steps has the Government of Canada taken to ensure that a similar accident does not occur in Canadian waters?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, that is rather an involved question and one that I do not think I could be expected to deal with during the oral Question Period. I shall ask for a report on this matter from my colleague, the Minister of the Environment.

Senator Kenny: I should like to ask a supplementary question, honourable senators. If the Leader of the Government is going to seek a report on this, perhaps he could also seek a report on what Canada's capacity would be to deal with a spill, if one should take place.

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, my friend must know, just for openers, as I say, that there is a Canada-U.S. vessel traffic management agreement that covers the kind of traffic the honourable senator is talking about. However, I shall make inquiries to see what further information I can bring on behalf of the Minister of the Environment.

Senator Kenny: My concern stems from reports that the Deputy Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard advises us that, while there are two clean-up depots in southern British Columbia, neither of them has the capacity to deal with a spill anywhere near the size of the *Exxon Valdez* spill. If one or two ships equivalent in size to the *Exxon Valdez* are sailing through Canadian waters each day, which is a total of 730 million barrels a year, and we do not have the capacity to deal with them, I should like to know what the government is doing.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ATLANTIC PROVINCES—RENEWAL OF FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENTS

Hon. Eymard G. Corbin: Honourable senators, I should like to ask a question of the \$6 billion Leader of the Government. I know that part of his heart is still in the Maritime provinces. I do not fault him for that. I believe it is a good thing.

As he knows, joint federal-provincial development programs were allowed to lapse at the end of March. These are programs affecting resource development in the fields of forestry, mining and fisheries. The premiers of the Maritime provinces have expressed concern, some of them grave concern, over this lapsing, and at least one has expressed optimism that these development programs will be revived, as they understand it, after the presentation of the federal budget some time in the near future—next month or five weeks or three weeks, who knows.

I preface my question in such a way as to attempt to elicit a positive response from the Leader of the Government in the hope that he can today state with some assurance, not only to

the premiers but to the hundreds of workers who stand to lose their jobs if these agreements are not extended into another period of years, that it is in fact the intention of the federal government to keep these agreements alive in order to foster greater opportunities in the Maritime provinces.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, quite aside from the fiscal considerations and the fact that firm decisions on these matters must await the budget, I do want to emphasize that these economic development agreements between the federal government and the provinces, when they come up for review and renewal, are renegotiated and are sometimes replaced by other agreements, depending upon the priorities that are agreed upon between the federal government and the provinces. No one should regard it as automatic that every ERDA sub-agreement is renewed when its expiry date arrives.

Having said that, the only statement that I am in a position to make today is that the federal government remains as strongly committed as ever to federal-provincial cooperation in economic development. Discussions are continuing between the federal government and the provinces concerned about the ERDAs and about economic development generally, but any announcement must await the forthcoming budget.

Senator Corbin: I appreciate the Leader of the Government's explanation. I take it, then, that there is disagreement as to the development priorities. On the other hand, I note that it seems to be the wish of the premiers to have the same agreements extended for another period of years. I recognize, therefore, that there is a difference of opinion.

However, I do not understand the condition being suggested that one has to wait for the federal budget to be brought down before anything can happen. I have in my hands a CP story out of St. John's, Newfoundland, from which I would like to quote. To put things in context, I should remind everyone that the province of Newfoundland is now in an election period. The release says:

But by Monday afternoon,—

Monday afternoon was yesterday afternoon,—

the strong-jawed Premier of Newfoundland Tom Rideout emerged from the taping of election campaign television ads with some good news—a pair of five-year development agreements for Newfoundland and Labrador.

I do not fault Newfoundland and Labrador for getting the agreements.

The federal-provincial pacts will provide \$29.2 million for rural development on the Island and another \$53.8 million for the fisheries, forestry and tourism sectors of Labrador.

My question is simple. Why could Newfoundland not wait, like the other three Atlantic provinces, for the budget to be brought down? Was that simply an accident, a coincidence or an act of sheer political opportunism?

Senator Murray: None of the above, honourable senators. I do know something about those sub-agreements. The reason I