

to ensure that those ships involved in oil spills are paying for the pollution they cause.

We are looking for co-operation with the provincial government of British Columbia to make sure that the coast line is clear. I know that my colleague the Minister of Transport has been working very hard on this issue. I intend to meet very shortly with the provincial minister of the environment for British Columbia to ensure we have a joint federal-provincial response on an issue that is of crucial concern to British Columbia.

Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question.

Our studies show that the risks of an oil spill drop by 40 per cent when tankers have double hulls. The current time frame for requiring double hulls stretches into the next century.

Would the minister move to accelerate this requirement and reduce the risk of a disastrous oil spill in our coastal waters?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I did indicate to the hon. member that in implementing the recommendations of the public review panel on tanker safety and marine spills response capacity, one of the issues was double hulling. The federal government has set aside \$100 million specifically to try and accelerate the implementation of some of these issues.

If the hon. member and his colleagues are prepared to yield more money from the public treasury, we would be very happy to move in quicker fashion on these important issues.

* * *

[Translation]

EXCISE TAX ACT

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Quebec law enforcement authorities want more powers to fight cigarette smuggling. Right now, an officer of the Sûreté du Québec cannot apprehend a smuggler, without calling on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

What does the Prime Minister intend to do to ensure that provincial police in Ontario and in Quebec can enforce the Excise Tax Act?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we intend to propose amendments to the Excise Tax Act in order to give Quebec and Ontario police the authority they need to enforce the law in their jurisdiction. This was mentioned in the statement given today by the minister.

Oral Questions

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay): How does the Prime Minister think he can improve co-ordination between the RCMP and the federal and provincial police forces, which has been, up to now, absolutely inefficient, especially in my own riding of Châteauguay?

• (1455)

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am personally in contact with my counterparts, Mr. Middlemiss, in Quebec, and Mr. Christopherson, in Ontario, and I have received assurances from the commissioner of the RCMP that he, himself, is in contact with his counterparts. I am convinced that we will have the co-operation we need to curb smuggling.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, for nine years the Liberal Party complained, and rightly so, about patronage appointments of unqualified people by the Conservative government.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. What procedure has his department developed to ensure that all appointments in his department are based on merit, not patronage?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I would request the hon. member to be a little bit more specific because the department has such extensive activities.

We are in the business, for example, of appointing arbitrators in the Department of Labour. We consult business and labour to get nominations in these areas. We also appoint people who act as referees under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Again we consult the stakeholders in those areas to get recommendations, as we do from the general public.

The hon. member will be glad to know that in many cases these openings are put forward for gazetting, where they involve people like the chairman or vice-chair of the Canada Labour Relations Board.

We are reviewing ways to make sure it is an open process. I would point out to the hon. member that we take great pride in the competence of our arbitrators, our UI board of referees and I think the record of the people serving in those posts bears out that confidence.

* * *

G-7 CONFERENCE

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.