

remarks of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale). I noted that in his question on March 2 he referred to the minister's reference to terrorists and separatists. I should like to correct that. I presume he now realizes that the information was inaccurate; that reference was made to separatists but never to terrorists. I do not think it has ever been denied that there are separatists—

**Mr. Dinsdale:** I quoted the word "terrorists" from the article.

**Mr. Danson:** The article was incorrect. I am sure the hon. member realizes that newspaper reports are not always completely accurate, and certainly the minister is not necessarily called upon to defend remarks made outside the House. Nevertheless, I am assured that the reference to terrorists was inaccurate.

The question of separatists is different, of course. Being a separatist is not illegal in this country today, nor is it illegal to be a Tory—and some people think it is quite bad. Some people think that being a Liberal is bad, also. So we have this freedom of political choice. Some espouse the separatist doctrine, which is that of a legal party in our system. I think it is generally acknowledged that a certain percentage of people are of this persuasion.

The important thing is whether the people involved in the mass media are using their position unduly—which is suggested by the hon. member—or whether they are doing their job capably and not using it as personal propaganda media. Perhaps that is really the nub of the question. Certainly it is a matter of balance; and the balance we always seek is to maintain the freedom of dissent and not to abuse it. It is a very difficult and sensitive balance and we have to make certain that we do not throw out the baby with the bathwater.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Like the War Measures Act!

**Mr. Danson:** I need not apologize for the War Measures Act, and I do not think the people of Canada want an apology, because of the circumstances which brought it about.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** A stitch in time saves nine.

**Mr. Danson:** A stitch in time may save nine, but I am not quite sure how it relates here. Nevertheless, I think the hon. member has pointed out a problem—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett).

POLLUTION—CONTAMINATION OF WEST COAST OF VANCOUVER ISLAND BY OIL—RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEANING UP BEACHES

**Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, the things I would like to say tonight would be much easier said if I had 40 minutes rather than seven. The question I want to deal with was first raised by myself on March 1 in these terms:

Mr. Speaker, I have a question on a matter of emergency which is causing widespread concern on the Pacific coast. Normally I would address it to the Minister of Transport but in his

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absence perhaps I might direct it to the Prime Minister. I may say I was in touch with the office of the Minister of Transport on Friday after news of this event reached Ottawa. Can the Prime Minister report to the House on the nature and extent of the mass of heavy oil moving on to the shore of Vancouver Island's west coast in the vicinity of our new national park, and can he advise what steps are being taken by the Department of Transport or any other agency to effect a clean-up?

The Prime Minister said he would draw the matter to the attention of the Minister of Transport because he had no information on it. On the following day, when the Minister of Transport was in the House, I referred to the question I had asked the Prime Minister and indicated that in a communication from the minister's office I had been advised, in addition to certain other information, that the cleaning of beaches was not within the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport. This information was also transmitted to the MLA for Alberni who had wired the Minister of Transport from Victoria on the same subject. This led me to ask the Minister of Transport:

Under what jurisdiction was the clean-up at Chedabucto Bay undertaken?

Mr. Speaker, who was in the chair at that time, felt that was not a proper question for the oral question period and suggested I might raise it at ten o'clock, which I am doing. I would like to refer the *House of Commons Debates* of February 20, 1970, page 3893, where the Minister of Transport, dealing with the matter at Chedabucto Bay, is reported as having said:

On the question of what we are doing about it, I might advise the House that this morning I appointed Dr. P. D. McTaggart-Cowan to be the Department of Transport project manager with regard to the whole problem in the Chedabucto Bay area.

Elaborating on that statement on February 24, as recorded at page 4012 of *Hansard*, the minister said:

—I have asked Dr. McTaggart-Cowan and his associates to have the pollution cleaned up by the start of the major fishing season in the area about May 1st. They have undertaken to do so to the very best of their ability. In their effort they will have the full support of all government and many private Canadian and international agencies.

He went on to explain that Dr. McTaggart-Cowan was meeting that day with the Premier of Nova Scotia. I submit that by that statement the minister clearly indicated that the Department of Transport was accepting responsibility and recognized jurisdiction in respect of the situation at Chedabucto Bay. More recently, in the debate on the report stage of Bill C-2 the Minister of Transport on March 1, as recorded at page 3835 of *Hansard*, said:

It is perfectly clear that in terms of the sections with regard to pollution matters and the like, the expertise and the capability repose in the Department of Transport. It is also evident, I think, from events of the past year or so—

I might interject that this was an obvious reference to the situation at Chedabucto Bay.

—that we have quite the best capability that exists at the present time for dealing with pollution incidents of this kind. I would not want to argue that our capability is by any means 100 per cent...there is a great deal more to be learned about this subject.