

Inquiries of the Ministry

member for Fundy-Royal, I said we were expecting to obtain from the United States the results of the previous explosion, and that we would examine these results before deciding whether it was appropriate for us to make any further representations.

POLLUTION**CHEDABUCTO BAY—SITUATION RESPECTING TANKER "ARROW"—REMOVAL OF WARNING BUOY—LIABILITY COVERAGE**

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. I wonder whether the minister could clarify conflicting statements as to the position of the stern of the tanker *Arrow* and what is happening to it in view of what he said on Monday about moving it out to sea and sinking it or pumping out the bunker oil.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised at the hon. member's confusion. I have had the suspicion sometimes that there are times when he cannot tell his bow from his stern. Apart from that, the position at the moment is that there are very high winds and 15-foot waves prevailing in the area. Three tugs have a line aboard on the stern portion of the ship. It is shifting on the rock ledge but has not yet moved off the rock ledge. The intention is to keep it on the ledge until the bad weather subsides. It is still floating. As I indicated yesterday, if we can see a way in which to pump the oil into another vessel so that the oil will not have to be either burned or dumped into the water, we will take appropriate action. However, this will not be possible today since weather conditions are such that salvage activities are virtually at a standstill.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I take it from what the minister has said that the situation is now under control. Yesterday he said that it was not.

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, it is slightly more under control. When there are 3,800,000 gallons of oil around, the situation is never under control until the oil is disposed of. It is under control to the extent that the seepage from either the bow or the stern sections has been considerably reduced as a result of the ability of the salvage experts to seal off some of the cracks in the hull.

[Mr. Sharp.]

Mr. Nowlan: A supplementary question to the genial minister. I make no bones about the fact that I do know where my stern and my bow are, but from the minister's explanation it sounds as though he is still at sea. In view of the conflicting statements that he made on Monday and Tuesday I ask him whether the department has considered bringing the stern section of the tanker that is floatable to the shore and draining it of oil on the shore, or burning it in a controlled way on the shore, rather than taking the stern farther out and dumping the oil in the deep sea where it will still cause pollution?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, all these possibilities are being examined and tested by experts both in the ecological field and in the salvage field. Whichever method proves to be the least harmful will be the one employed. Certainly, the least harmful method of all, if it can be achieved, is to keep the stern afloat until the oil has been pumped into another container or ship, and this is what we are trying to achieve.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Transport. Is it correct, as has been suggested, that the rock was marked by a buoy until a few weeks ago, when the buoy was removed?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer that question directly. As I said yesterday, a study is under way; an investigation is being made of the entire incident. As soon as a report is available, I will see it is provided to the House and the public.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. Since the present legislation does not provide for unlimited liability insurance to be carried as protection against accidents of this type, could the minister inform the House what is the total liability insurance carried by the *Arrow* in respect of both vessel and cargo? I also ask whether the minister believes, as does his colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, that the polluter in such cases must pay.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure that the second part of the question is in order. If the minister has the information, he might respond to the first part of the hon. member's supplementary.