

Oral Questions

Hon. members probably know that the corps members must be former members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or our allied forces.

Today, the Corps of Commissionaires has over 11,000 members in 18 divisions across Canada.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Ottawa division started in 1939 with just four members. It now has a strength of 2,200, and is the fourth largest non-government employer in Ottawa.

I know the House will join me in congratulating the Ottawa division on 50 years of super service and in sending our best wishes to all commissionaires across Canada.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, this House held a long and serious emergency debate on Canada's state of preparedness to deal with marine spills and particularly those of crude oil. This resulted from the tragic Nestucca and *Exxon Valdez* spills and the continued deterioration of our marine environment from chronic unreported spills.

Rather than hold a full public inquiry, the Prime Minister chose to spend millions of dollars on a review. The interim report was released yesterday. It is pathetic. Its 17 short pages reveal just how superficial the mandate and terms of reference really are.

The recommendations reveal a process that will neither seek nor find the kind of solutions required to protect our marine ecosystems. The report operates from the premise that existing technology, ships and barges will simply carry on.

On page 3, the panel states that they are comfortable with their mandate which excludes offshore exploration and development, excludes alternative modes of transporting oil and other chemicals and excludes energy conservation.

The review is a fraud. It is a cover-up of the ghastly and grizzly destruction of a marine environment by shipping firms and big oil companies.

There are solutions, Mr. Speaker, but this panel is simply spraying whitewash on the hull of a rusty super-tanker on a collision course. The Prime Minister is Canada's version of Captain Hazelwood.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Mr. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, last week, a number of Canadians received a questionnaire as part of a public opinion survey on the environment, sent by the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that this organization is doing very important and very good work.

However, in question No. 12, Canadians are asked to identify five areas on which the Canadian Wildlife Federation should focus in 1989. One of the fourteen areas listed is the following: "Impact of the Free Trade Agreement on the environment".

Mr. Speaker, I wonder what impact the Free Trade Agreement could have and indeed what connection it might have with the environment, since we know very well that the free trade agreement is about trade. The Federation must have made a mistake. I think it is useful to point out that there is a difference between the environment and the free trade agreement.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Since the return of Parliament last Monday, both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Transport have repeatedly refused to refer the Prime Minister's decision to scrap VIA Rail to the Commons transport committee or to the National Transportation Agency. The Prime Minister will know that the Commons transport committee voted almost unanimously this morning to conduct public hearings on the government's plans to terminate VIA Rail.