

Oral Questions

In view of the potential markets for this product, and in view of the industry's capability of being affluent and independent, provided sales and agricultural expertise are combined in the consulates of the world, has the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, in view of representations made to him by officials and growers from Atlantic Canada, taken any steps to put the expertise of sales and agriculture combined in consulates in areas in which this type of high-quality product could be sold to assist Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, we have been working actively on this matter, particularly with respect to the European Community. We have been increasing our efforts to clear away certain obstacles in the export of seed potatoes to that important market area, and we will continue to do so. We also committed ourselves, in the Speech from the Throne, to organizing a new agricultural export corporation which will be able to work in co-operation with my department to facilitate exports of seed potatoes and other Canadian agricultural products.

Mr. McCain: Madam Speaker, while the European Economic Community is a very important market for this product, the market is much broader and much wider than has been described by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The market is international. I would ask him, therefore, to consult with the industry, with maritime officials, make a list of potential markets and to assure Atlantic Canada that this industry could be independent with the proper representation in foreign consulates.

I would like to say that the interjections by the maritime members with respect to representations on behalf of the maritimes indicates their guilty conscience and their incapacity to represent Atlantic Canada as Liberal members.

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, we have already been consulting with the people mentioned by my hon. friend. My colleague, the Minister of State for Trade, recently met with a major spokesman of the New Brunswick seed potato industry. We have taken aboard those kinds of views and, in particular, the views of our very active and capable Liberal members from the maritimes in a way which will lead to a greatly expanded export of maritime seed potatoes to all relevant markets in the world.

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ENERGY**RESOURCE OWNERSHIP UNDER CONTROL OF PROVINCES—
GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Jack Masters (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the right hon. Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister meets with Premier Lougheed later this month to discuss oil policy, will he take into account a recent Gallup poll which shows that only 16 per cent of western Canadians favour the constitutional position of Mr.

Lougheed that resource ownership be under the total control of the province?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Don't believe it for a second, Pierre.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, it has always been the position of the Liberal party—and I stated that in so many words in the throne speech debate in this House a few months ago—that when there is a conflict of interest between a regional interest and the interest of the whole nation, the people of Canada would support action on behalf of the interest of the whole nation.

Mr. Crosbie: Right on.

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TRANSPORT**RECOVERY OF DAMAGES FROM OIL SPILL OF "KURDISTAN" AND
CRASHING OF SOVIET SATELLITE**

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Justice, I put my question to the Minister of Transport who must have knowledge of all these matters.

Mr. Crosbie: Some hopes!

Mr. Corbett: Would the minister explain to the House the government's plan to sue the Nile Steamship Company of Great Britain, a respected employer of hundreds of British subjects, over the sinking of the tanker *Kurdistan* in the Cabot Strait in March, 1979, for the amount involved, and advise whether or not it is his government's intention to sue the Soviet Union for damages incurred in 1978 when the Soviet nuclear satellite, Cosmos 954, crashed into Canada's northland, which it apparently cannot collect?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, indeed I do have a note on that subject.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pepin: The company-owner of the ship had taken legal action to limit its liability to \$3 million. The cleaning-up operation has cost the Government of Canada \$6.9 million, and the government opposed the company's action by filing a statement of defence in court on July 15. Action on this matter is not expected to commence in court until after a U.K. formal inquiry which is scheduled to begin in January, 1981.

Mr. Nielsen: Now for the second part of the question.

Mr. Corbett: Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his answer to the first portion of my question. However, he neglected the second portion of my question, which is whether or not the government intends to sue the Soviet Union for the cost of the Cosmos incident. Canada's claim in the Cosmos incident is slightly over \$6 million, despite the cost to the