

MARINE TRANSPORT

PROTECTION SAFEGUARDS FOR FISHERMEN

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, I wish to direct a very important question to the Minister of Transport. At the present time fishing quotas that are established by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans literally direct most of Atlantic Canada's deep sea fishing effort into the frigid iceberg prone waters of Hamilton Bank, off the coast of Labrador, where at any given time some one half of the fleet operating in that area comes from the province of Nova Scotia. They are required to fish through ice packs which are five or six feet thick. As these men face almost certain loss of life in times of disaster because foreign hospital ships, freezer trawlers and support ships are no longer operating in the area, what does the minister propose to do in order to protect the lives of Canadian mariners beyond the present inadequate rescue facilities that are in place?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): The question is rather a general one, is it not, Madam Speaker? I can only answer with a cliché that we intend to do the best we can with the equipment and the money we have. My hon. friend has a particular preoccupation. If he feels that a certain area is not sufficiently taken into account by the coast guard, I would be grateful if he would indicate which one it is and I will be pleased to provide him with whatever information I can find on the particular item.

Madam Speaker: The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

I see the member for South Shore is rising. His supplementary question should be very short.

Mr. Crouse: Madam Speaker, the minister has asked me for a suggestion and that is why I rise on a supplementary question. In February, 1982—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. It should not a suggestion even if the minister has asked the hon. member for a suggestion. The hon. member should ask a question.

REQUEST THAT COAST GUARD SHIP BE STATIONED AT ST. ANTHONY, NFLD.

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, the minister knows that there has been a tremendous loss of life in the area within the past year and a half. Since there are many tragic examples that I could give to the minister of this loss of life, will he consider establishing a coast guard ship on station at St. Anthony, Newfoundland, equipped with a helicopter pad, in order to provide more adequate protection for our mariners who are forced at the present time to operate in this rather rough environment?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, we will certainly take that suggestion into account. I will bring it to my officials and have it debated. The department's view on this matter will be provided to the hon. member

Oral Questions

by me, to which he can object and give me his reason for the objection.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

FALKLAND ISLANDS—OPTIONS BEFORE CABINET

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, who has indicated that Canada's policy toward Argentina is to speak loudly and send nuclear bundles. Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs confirm that the choice which was before the cabinet of Canada in relation to Argentina was, on the one hand, to suspend all commercial relations until the Argentinian forces were out of the Falkland Islands, and on the other hand to proceed with "business as usual", and the Government of Canada chose the option of business as usual?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, as often happens, the right hon. Leader of the Opposition has completely distorted the position of the government. The choice before the government was, as the European community decided, whether to render impossible any future contracts between Canadians and Argentinians. We took that step, which was exactly the same kind of step the European community had taken in support of Britain. It would not be sensible to go beyond that in a general way because these contracts in the past were entered into in good faith. This is particularly true in the case of the nuclear industry. It would not be a good idea to engage in any such abrogation of past contracts because in this instance it would leave the Argentinians the option of declaring that, if the contract were not fulfilled on our part they, for their part, would not be bound by the undertaking which they gave to use Canadian technology only for peaceful purposes.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, these contracts were entered into before Argentina undertook an act of aggression against Great Britain and put occupying forces on the Falkland Islands. Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs or the Prime Minister, if he is interested, tell us how Canada expects to be taken seriously on this question when, on the one hand, we condemn and, on the other hand, we send and export 3,000 nuclear fuel bundles to Argentina?

● (1500)

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the right hon. member appears to be rather badly informed on this case. The uranium which is involved in the fuel bundles is not even Canadian uranium. It is Argentinian uranium which we are upgrading in Canada according to the contract into which we solemnly entered.