

Adjournment Debate

to consider the impact the project would have on the owners of the buildings where public servants in the Halifax region are accommodated at the present time. Everyone finally realized that the owners would be put under undue pressure if all public servants that could be accommodated in the complex were to move at the same time. Indeed, the resulting vacancy rate in private sector office buildings would have caused a number of problems.

That is why, after reviewing the situation, we decided to reduce the scope of the project by about half, so as to eliminate most of the problems that could be expected, while at the same time meeting the need for bringing a number of public servants under the same roof.

Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker, we tried to acquire the land required to build this project. The harbour front property mentioned by the Hon. Member was our first choice, but public reaction indicated that a building of this kind on the waterfront was unacceptable, especially since originally, the project was to include a laboratory for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, in addition to the general purpose office building. It has now been decided that the Fisheries and Oceans laboratory will remain in its present location. We have also managed to find another location that will suit our needs. The property is on the corner of Cogswell and Gottingen. The choice of this site received the unanimous support of the municipal authorities, and it will definitely help to revitalize the Gottingen Street neighbourhood. We have published notice of our intention to expropriate, and work will start as soon as we have obtained title to the land.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that thanks to this project, we expect to create more than 500 jobs.

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—UNITED STATES—OIL DRILLING LEASES
OFF COAST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. (B) CANADIAN
SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, in my question of May 15, page 3734 of *Hansard* I asked the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs about the protest note recently sent to the United States, last week I believe, over the proposed oil drilling leases being put out to tender to interested U.S. petroleum companies in the area of the Dixon Entrance off the British Columbia northern coast. I received anything but a satisfactory answer. My question raised not only the sovereignty concerns but environmental concerns as well.

● (1810)

Let me explain. The area for lease as cited by the *Federal Register* of the United States for March 30 at page 12763 extends into waters over which Canada has a claim. It seems as though the United States Government is also claiming waters in that area. In other words, the area is in dispute. Jurisdiction over this area is not fully determined. Therefore, it

seems to me that the United States is building its case and Canada is to be commended for counterclaiming by means of a protest note and for strengthening the case for its claim.

That is fine for now, but the Canadian Government was asleep at the switch when hearings relating to the whole lease area were held in Alaska during the week of February 13, 1984, as cited by the *Federal Register*, the American counterpart to *The Canada Gazette*. Where was the Canadian Government then? Why was it not at the hearings? Why did it not make representations to the U.S. Government at those hearings?

The area about which hearings were being held at that time is exactly the same area over which the protest is now being made three months later. Aside from the sovereignty question over lands which Canada has claims, important as that question may be, there are Canadian environmental concerns implicit in any hydrocarbon exploration in the area which may be put up to lease. That is another reason for Canada's attendance at those earlier meetings which were called by the Department of the Interior.

The lease area blocks off, as it were, access to the open sea for Canadian salmon spawned in the Stikine, the Nass and the Skeena Rivers, just as it blocks off access for mature and spawning fish heading up those streams to do the thing that comes naturally; that is to spawn, fertilize eggs and produce more salmon. That area is up for lease to petroleum exploration companies and there could be environmental concerns.

Canada's interests are at issue. Why was Canada therefore not represented at the hearings in Alaska which were held in February 1984? Why has Canada only now awakened to the threat to Canadian sovereignty?

As far as I can tell, the salmon question was taken into account only as recently as this weekend. I asked for a copy of the note that was presented to the Government of the United States in protest over the sovereignty issue, and I asked if it covered the environmental issue. As I say, I did not receive a satisfactory answer. The Minister did not seem to know.

I do hope that the Hon. Member who is replying for the Minister will be able to say that that note will be made available to Canadians so that they will know how strongly the Government is protesting on the sovereignty issue, and whether or not it is protesting on the environmental issue. If it is not, I do hope that a second note will be sent making it clear to the United States authorities that there is an environmental issue as well, that there is a threat to the salmon stocks that spawn in Canadian streams, go through the archipelago, which is now a part of the Alaska panhandle, into the Gulf of Alaska to the Pacific Ocean. That is a legitimate cause for protest and I do hope that a second note will cover that issue if the first note did not.

● (1815)

[Translation]

Mr. Henri Tousignant (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, in the absence of the Deputy Prime Minister and