

Oral Questions

Mr. Beatty: As the CBC is a government owned network, does the government not feel it has a peculiar responsibility for the lives and well-being of its employees? In light of the minister's answer that it seems to be quite all right if people volunteer to stay behind in Viet Nam, does the minister intend to get in touch with employees of the External Affairs Department to ask whether volunteers will return to South Viet Nam to keep our embassy offices there open?

Mr. Sharp: On the first part of the question, Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have any greater responsibility for the employees of the CBC than we have for other Canadians. This is a decision that they make. If they want to go there in the interests of providing news for the Canadian people, I respect that and I rather admire it. In so far as the operation of the embassy is concerned, like other countries such as Britain, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and every other country with the exception of France and the United States, all the embassies have been withdrawn. I think it was a wise decision.

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AIR CANADA

ESTEY INQUIRY—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Can the minister indicate if he has discussed the terms of reference of the Air Canada inquiry with Judge Estey? If so, did he also discuss the proposals offered by members of the opposition regarding the terms of reference and will he be in a position today to table the agreed-upon terms of reference between himself and Judge Estey?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Yes, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I hope to have that before the end of the question period.

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FISHERIES

USE OF CANADIAN FORCES VESSELS TO INTERCEPT FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS IN CANADIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State (Fisheries). Due to the problems caused by distant fishing fleets off the west coast of Canada, will Canadian Forces vessels with fisheries' officers be used to intercept foreign vessels which enter our 12-mile territorial sea, a practice which has been followed off the east coast of Canada with considerable success?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)): Mr. Speaker, in the case of our territorial waters, there is no problem. The protection act gives us clear authority. In the case of international waters, however, according to the reciprocal arrangements which we have—and we have these arrangements with Japan and the United States—

[Mr. Sharp.]

fisheries' officers can board other vessels within the framework of international agreements. In fact, recently the destroyer *Gatineau*, with a fisheries' officer on board, came across a Japanese fishing vessel. It was asked to leave the area, which was Canadian waters, and it complied. There was no violation reported.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED CHANGE IN ROUTE OF TANKERS TRANSPORTING ALASKAN OIL TO CHERRY POINT—PROGRESS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. In view of the fact that several days ago the Canadian government abandoned any further attempts to have the American government admit responsibility for the Cherry Point oil spill of several years ago, will the minister advise what steps are being taken between the government of Canada and the government of the United States with respect to negotiations aimed at persuading the Americans to change the destination point for Alaskan tankers, taking them out of the confined waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca?

Hon. Jeanne Sauv  (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we have not abandoned the case as the hon. member has stated. We still feel there is a responsibility there for that accident. With regard to the more general question, I discussed this with my counterpart in Washington three weeks ago. The hon. gentleman has never believed that we were looking at alternate options for the transportation of oil in that area. The hon. member has always chosen to interpret the negotiations we have undertaken with officials in the United States for developing vessel traffic schemes as an indicator that we did not have any feeling about these problems. However, the matter of an alternate port for these vessels is progressing. I am very satisfied with the fact that there is a law before the United States authority to provide a fund for building a pipeline in order that an alternate site can be chosen for the delivery of oil. All along, we were negotiating traffic schemes which were indispensable. We were working on other possibilities and I am happy to tell the hon. gentleman that I think we shall be successful.

● (1140)

POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT WITH UNITED STATES ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR OIL SPILLS AND PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): I am very pleased, as all members will be, by the minister's answer. I hope we are successful. Can the minister advise the House whether, in conjunction with these discussions, any attempt is being made to establish a treaty or other arrangement between the Canadian government and the government of the United States whereby each government, depending on whose nationals cause a spill, would be responsible for payment to the other in respect of damages caused by that spill.