

Minister referred to a fund established in connection with oil tankers in our waters as distinct from freighters such as this ship. Has the government in fact undertaken to underwrite the clean-up cost in connection with this oil spill and, if so, what fund will take care of it?

Mr. Trudeau: Once again, we do not know the cause of the disaster and therefore we cannot yet at this date ascertain the responsibility. If it is possible, of course, to determine responsibility on someone's behalf, we will take suit in the normal fashion.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact the Prime Minister is meeting Premier Hatfield today to discuss the oil pollution fund, will the Prime Minister himself, or through the ministers involved, see that the whole subject is related to the fact that we in the Maritimes may be paying through this levy for some of the damage on the west coast?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think that the question is in the form of a representation or an argument.

POSSIBLE LEGISLATION TO CONTROL OIL-CARRYING SHIPS ON PACIFIC COAST

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I address a supplementary question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the fact this oil spill is not the only one that has taken place—there was one a few days ago in Nanoose Bay from Department of National Defence ships there—is the government contemplating any legislation that would restrict and control the type of movement of oil-carrying vessels on the Pacific coast so as to prevent the recurrence of these many, very dangerous spills that have taken place in recent months?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): The House of Commons knows that we took this kind of measure as regards shipping in the Arctic zone. However, with regard to the east and west coasts nothing is contemplated at this time beyond the legislation we have already brought forward to amend the Canada Shipping Act.

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister with reference to his last answer that we do have legislation, Bill C-2, covering this subject. When does the government intend to bring in regulations under that bill to tighten up security with regard to ships of this kind?

Mr. Trudeau: I am afraid I will have to defer on that question to the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Speaker: I recognize the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East for the last supplementary on this subject.

OIL SPILLS—SUGGESTED PAYMENT OF CLEAN-UP COSTS FROM GENERAL REVENUES PENDING BUILD-UP OF FUND FROM LEVY

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether

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or not he would now consider in cabinet the advisability of the government establishing out of general revenues the required fund for the clean-up of oil pollution so that we would not have to wait for a number of years for the levy on oil movements to build up the fund to the level indicated as adequate by the government?

• (1430)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the House knows that the government has not waited for the establishment of this fund. We have had to clean up spills in the past and we will continue to do so in the future. This levy is just a way whereby we can ensure that the large corporations which are moving oil will in some manner be able to pay for any damages which result from any accident.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

EXPLOSION OF NUCLEAR DEVICE IN ATMOSPHERE BY PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIONS

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether the government of the People's Republic of China had informed the Canadian government of its intention to explode a nuclear device in the atmosphere and, if so, whether this government expressed any protest against that intention?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The answer to the question, Mr. Speaker, is no. The People's Republic of China did not notify us in advance. They do know, of course, our attitude toward explosions in the atmosphere. We are hoping the People's Republic of China will abandon its position and join with the Soviet Union and the United States in bringing an end to these tests in the atmosphere.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the report about the explosion the other day also stated that the government of the People's Republic of China intends to explode some other kind of nuclear device in the atmosphere in the future. In view of that, is the government considering making formal representations to the government of China, through the diplomatic channels which are now open, urging that government not to continue these tests?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have been considering this. I do not know whether it would add to the force of the representations we have already made to them both publicly and privately, but it is a suggestion that I have in hand. I do not want to get into the position, however, where protests of this kind are routine matters that follow each time they explode one of these devices. What we are looking for is an end to the testing, not the satisfaction of protesting.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I am not asking for the satisfaction of protesting. Is the minister considering this kind of protest as a means of trying to persuade the government of the People's Republic of China to join the ban on