

Oral Questions

mittee of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**POSSIBILITY OF SELLING RAILWAY STOCK TO CHINA**

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the continuing high unemployment rate on Cape Breton Island, and in view of the fact that the Sydney Steel Corporation has been able to get into foreign markets in the past, including Korea and Asia, can the minister advise the House what potential there may be to sell rails, railway cars and locomotives to China as a result of the discussions he and Canadian businessmen had recently with the foreign trade minister in Peking?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member, having been a very valuable member of the delegation, will know that there was considerable interest expressed in both rolling stock and other forms of railway equipment in China. There is a good prospect there, and we will continue to follow it up. I should add, of course, that there are a number of prospects, as well, through CIDA payments to various countries and one or two of these have already materialized for rail cars to be produced in Nova Scotia. I hope that others will come through for rails as well as cars.

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RAILWAYS**OWNERSHIP OF ABANDONED LINES**

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. It concerns the monitoring committee dealing with rights-of-way of railway lines abandoned on the prairies. Has the minister obtained from the law officers of the Crown a definite statement about the legal ownership of these abandoned railway lines when the railways cease operating them?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think there is no doubt about the position in relation to those lines: they are the property of the two railways. In both cases, however, they have agreed to give the land to us, and we are setting up the necessary machinery to put the land into the hands of the appropriate owner, which most often is the farmer through whose land the right-of-way passes. It is our intention to give the benefit of the land, whether it remains in the hands of the farmer, the municipality or occasionally the province, to the municipality in question so that they will be compensated for the loss of the rights-of-way and service.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, am I correct in deducting from the answer of the minister that

[Mr. Blais.]

there has not been a statement from the law officers of the Crown?

Mr. Lang: No, Mr. Speaker, that is not correct. I think there have been, in fact, based on rather secondary questions rather than the principal one the hon. member asked, because so far as I know no one has any doubt about that.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED STATES ON FISHERIES AND HYDROCARBON RESOURCES**

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Before doing so, however, may I join in welcoming him back safely from his recent trip to China.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crouse: When the minister released the text of the joint report of the chief negotiators on the Canada-United States maritime boundaries dispute, he indicated that fish stocks off our two coasts would be divided into three management categories, and that each country would be entitled to one-half the oil and gas production from the shared access zones covering hydrocarbon resources.

Would the minister indicate on which issue the negotiations have bogged down? Is it on the sharing of fisheries' resources, the sharing of hydrocarbon resources, or on the proposal with regard to the boundaries? Since the question of offshore hydrocarbon resources in Canada is a matter of direct interest to the provinces of Atlantic Canada, did the federal government consult the provinces during this phase of the negotiations?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will appreciate that it is not possible to be very specific, nor would it be wise to indicate the areas which remain unresolved. I can tell him, however, that there is some question remaining unsettled with regard to various matters of allocation of fish stocks. There are some hydrocarbon issues which remain unresolved, and there is the question of the actual drawing of the boundary. None of this has been firmly put in place, but the whole negotiating process is continuing and I would, therefore, prefer not to go beyond these general comments.

I can tell the hon. member, as well, that the provinces on the east and west coasts have been thoroughly involved in the negotiating process, and certainly up until the last round they or their representatives were present either in Washington or Ottawa, depending on where the talks between the negotiators were taking place. I would not want to leave the impression that I am pessimistic. I believe the mere fact that we extended the mandates of the two negotiators for a short period indicates that they are moving toward what I hope will be a satisfactory solution for both sides.