

DISASTERS

SINKING OF *ROWAN GORILLA* OIL RIG—SEAWORTHINESS
INSPECTION QUERY

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question, which I shall come to in a moment, is for the Minister of Energy.

I know that all Members of the House breathed a sigh of relief and offered a prayer of thanks when the 27 crew members of the oil rig *Rowan Gorilla* were brought home, after spending 24 hours in a survival capsule at sea. I know, as well, that my colleagues in this place will join me in wishing those crew members and their families a very special Christmas this year.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: I should like to ask the Minister of Energy whether he can confirm today that, notwithstanding the fact that over 90 per cent of the crew aboard that U.S.-flagged rig were Canadians, no Canadian seaworthiness inspection or permission was required before the *Rowan Gorilla* left Halifax Harbour in an attempt to make a 30-day crossing of the Atlantic, under tow, in severe winter conditions.

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member has expressed the feelings of all of us in the House toward the people who went through great hardship a few days ago. But I want to tell the Hon. Member that as far as the Energy Department is concerned and particularly COGLA, the regulatory body that is responsible for those matters, according to the information I was given, the Government's responsibilities end the moment the platform leaves the drilling area where it was operating.

Inspections were made, as was reported in the newspapers, especially by the Coast Guard. Since they were not made in a regulatory context, the Government could not legally intervene because it has no authority in that matter.

[English]

REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF REGULATIONS APPLICABLE
TO OIL RIGS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, in February of 1982, 84 people lost their lives when the *Ocean Ranger* went down while operating under winter drilling conditions. The Royal Commission on the *Ocean Ranger* disaster recommended that all aspects of the operation and movement of drilling rigs be

covered under the Canada Shipping Act. The Government rejected that advice. The fact remains that this rig required no seaworthiness inspection by Canadian authorities, nor any permission whatsoever to leave Canadians waters in its attempt to make a 30-day crossing of the Atlantic.

The only consultation was that as between the rig owners and its insurers.

That is not good enough, Mr. Speaker, given the experience of February of 1982 and the loss of 84 lives.

I should like to ask the Minister of Energy whether he is, today, prepared to undertake a review of the current regulations covering both the operation and movement of oil rigs, and whether he will see that all vessels, including foreign-flagged vessels, are covered by the strict safety standards of the Canada Shipping Act, and whether he will initiate, in light of this near disaster, that review immediately.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, it should be very clear. The platform belongs to an American corporation. The incident occurred outside Canadian territorial waters and safety control is the responsibility of my colleague the Minister of Transport, who would like to give additional information.

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[English]

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE
AGREEMENT

EFFECT OF COMPANY SHUT-DOWNS

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade.

The closing of Gillette Canada has already resulted in a ripple effect on Hamida Textiles Inc., a company located in my riding of Parkdale—High Park.

With the possible passage of the Free Trade Agreement, better known as the Sale of Canada Act, small and medium-sized companies will be the first casualties in so far as production and employment levels are concerned.