

**Mr. Speaker:** Will the Hon. Minister please answer the question.

**Mr. Bussières:** —and understand what the facts are. He said that we do not want to act. Well, I have asked Mr. Farlinger, to give any advice he has on a regular basis, and I repeat for the benefit of the Hon. Member and the House and all Canadian taxpayers that I want to have this advice quickly, in order to be able to take corrective action if necessary. There is no question of wanting to cover up anything, Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. Every day in the House during Oral Question Period, I am available to answer questions by Hon. Members, and I try to answer them as clearly as possible, and if the Hon. Member's mind is too obtuse to understand the answers, it is not my fault.

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[English]

### ENERGY

#### NEWFOUNDLAND OFFSHORE DRILLING—PETROLEUM INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO COMPANIES

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Yesterday in St. John's, Newfoundland, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in a statement said that during last year when the province ordered the rigs in during severe weather conditions an industry official stated that he was left with no doubt that the Petroleum Incentive Payments would not be applicable to any cost incurred by his company during the period that drilling operations were suspended in response to the provincial stop-drilling order. Are the companies under any threat of recrimination or threat to withhold payments if in fact they obey the province's ban which is now in effect on winter drilling, in the absence of adequate search and rescue?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, there is no threat against anyone. There are federal regulations which the companies are following. They make their own decision on when they will operate the rigs. It is not for an armchair admiral to decide. Anybody who knows about marine operations knows that it is up to the captain of the rig to make a decision, not someone who is trying to use blackmail against the federal Government. It is up to the company to make the decision. They are paid for drilling. I hope they will continue drilling.

● (1140)

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, there are 500 Canadians out there working under very hazardous conditions. The Minister is putting their lives in danger by his partisan attitude to save face on this matter.

### Oral Questions

#### SEARCH AND RESCUE CAPABILITIES

**Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister if he is prepared to allow the rigs to obey the provincial ban on Winter drilling until there has been an assessment of the industry charge—not the Government's charge—because there is consent in the industry that search and rescue capabilities are inadequate to meet the emergencies that could arise during severe winter drilling conditions. Is he prepared to do that?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, the search and rescue facilities have been increased this year compared to last year. Last year the Government of Newfoundland found that the search and rescue was good enough to give them permission to drill in the Winter. This Winter we have improved search and rescue, but in that business it is never enough.

The companies, with the federal Departments of National Defence, and Energy, and others, and with the presence of the people representing the Government of Newfoundland, in the Fall discussed for weeks the improvements that are in place today. It was only many weeks after the decision was made that Mr. Marshall tried to blackmail the companies. I am glad to see today that the companies are not being blackmailed. On top of that, there was a radio program in St. John's a few minutes ago and more than 58 per cent of the people support the federal Government in that.

**Mr. McGrath:** An open-line radio show?

**Mr. Chrétien:** They do not go for the business of not respecting the judgment of the people who go to sea. Nobody is obliged to go to sea. If some people find it too dangerous, they can stay on shore.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Chrétien:** They do not stay on shore but go out and earn a living as they should do.

**Mr. McGrath:** Say that on an open-line show to sustain your argument.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans).

**Mr. Deans:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was quite incredible.

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### THE ECONOMY

#### REQUEST THAT PETROLEUM INCENTIVES PROGRAM GRANTS BE REDIRECTED TO ASSIST UNEMPLOYED

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. He will know that the statement just released by the major oil companies in Canada indicates that in the year 1983 they enjoyed an increased profit