

How many provincial employees are working in the fisheries field? How many full-time and part-time commercial fishermen are there in Canada? How many people are employed in the processing of fish?

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I thank Senator Godfrey for providing some prior notice of these questions. The answers pose a substantial research task for Fisheries Department officials, who must gather this information so that it can be made available to the Senate. That process has been under way since the inquiry from Senator Godfrey was received in letter form.

With regard to this question inquiring whether or not Mr. Fisher's newspaper column contains truths, Senator Godfrey, of course, is aware that a question, oral or written, must not inquire as to the truth of statements made in a newspaper.

Senator Godfrey: Therefore, I carefully refrained from asking that question. I think that rule is really one of the silliest we have, and I have demonstrated how easy it is to get around it.

ENERGY

OIL—REDUCTION IN EXPLORATION ACTIVITY

Hon. Martha P. Bielish: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development. Is he able to confirm the statistics released by the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, namely, that since the National Energy Program was introduced 184 rigs that had been drilling in western Canada have quit the country, and only one has since returned?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of State for Economic Development): Honourable senators, I will direct that inquiry to the people who are in possession of that information, and will ascertain whether or not it is true. That will depend, of course, on how things are added up.

Senator Bielish: I have a supplementary question. While the minister is making his inquiries, would he also verify the report which states that 107 servicing rigs have also departed? If that is true, we all know what it means to the economy.

Senator Olson: I will check that as well.

CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

U.S. WEAPONS TESTING IN CANADA

Hon. Stanley Haidasz: Honourable senators, I should like to direct a question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate. Can the minister confirm reports that the Canadian government is considering a request from the United States Defence Department that U.S. military weapons be tested on Canadian soil?

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the question will be taken as notice.

Senator Haidasz: I have a supplementary question. While the minister is seeking that information, would he also ascertain what Canada's role will be in the testing of those weapons? Secondly, would he find out Canada's share of the cost of conducting such tests?

TRANSPORT

MAINLAND-NEWFOUNDLAND FERRY SERVICE—SUBSIDIZATION OF PRIVATE CORPORATIONS

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer to the question asked by Senator Muir on March 3 last concerning the subsidization of freight movements to Newfoundland.

The Minister of Transport has taken action to terminate the subsidization of freight movements to Newfoundland by Newfoundland Steamships Limited, which is the only private carrier receiving a subsidy. The effective date of this action will be April 1, 1982. CN Marine Inc. will be the only subsidized ferry service carrying freight from the mainland, via the port of North Sydney, to Newfoundland after this date.

I would also like to include the Minister of Transport's press release for the information of honourable senators. Perhaps it could be incorporated in this reply.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, is it agreed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

(The press release follows:)

A buy-out of the Newfoundland Steamships Limited subsidy that provides a direct shipping service between Montréal and the Province of Newfoundland was announced today by Transport Minister Jean-Luc Pepin.

Newfoundland Steamships Limited entered into a 13-year shipping subsidy contract with the Canadian Transport Commission in April, 1973, to provide a shipping service as an alternative to the rail truck service between North Sydney and Port aux Basques, Newfoundland.

Termination of the current subsidy agreement, which expires March 31, 1986, will include lump sum payments of \$3.4 million in 1981-82 and \$2.5 million for 1982-83.

Direct shipping between Montréal and Newfoundland will continue to be served by two unsubsidized private shippers, Newfoundland Steamships Limited and Atlantic Freight Lines Limited.

Buy-out negotiations began in 1981 and the subsidies will cease after April 1, 1982.

UNITED NATIONS

OUTER SPACE TREATY—CANADIAN INITIATIVE

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer to the question asked by Senator Thompson on March 9 concerning strengthening the Outer Space Treaty.