

*Oral Questions*

Miquelon, or whether it is Canada. As a part of the effort to get that issue settled we are negotiating with France to send this matter to arbitration, which is the only way in which it can be settled peacefully and in accordance with international law. In the meantime our ambassador in Paris is making an official protest to the Government of France. If they follow the example of last year there will be no drilling under these permits. That is the position.

Our policy is firm and we can assure the House that it will continue to be firm, firmer than the position of the previous Government because it took no action to settle this issue in the 20 years it was in power.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## GOVERNMENT MEASURES

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, the President of France was so impressed with his private meeting with the Hon. Member for St. John's West that he promptly went home and had his Government issue two permits to drill off Newfoundland in sovereign Canadian waters. That is how impressed he was by that Minister who has shown all the backbone of a jellyfish.

I ask the Minister of fisheries, transport, Canada-France, offshore oil and gas, what measures is his Government going to take to ensure that no companies other than Canadian companies drill in sovereign Canadian waters? Have you got anything besides flippant words to offer the people of Canada and your fellow Newfoundlanders in this regard?

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, if shouting and braggadocio were effective I would put the hon. gentleman out offshore from St. Pierre and Miquelon and blow the French to kingdom come!

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Crosbie:** In the meantime a further meeting is set for Paris on June 24 and June 25 of this year to continue negotiations on fishery quotas. Other meetings are going to be held on the boundary.

The President of France was told of the firm and fixed position of the Government of Canada with reference to these questions off the East Coast of Newfoundland. He understands our position. Naturally they are trying to respond to the action we took in barring their vessels from Canadian ports, which action we are not going to change. That is action we took. The predecessor Liberal Government did nothing, but now they are in opposition they are like lions, tigers. They are like walruses.

**Mr. Langdon:** That is a hard act to follow, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Why bother?

**Mr. Shields:** Good point. Sit down.

[Translation]

## MINES AND MINING

## CLOSURE OF MURDOCHVILLE MINE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, the management of Gaspé Mines announced yesterday it was closing the Murdochville Mine. More than 400 people will be laid off as a result of this decision, which will have a disastrous impact on the community. What does the Government intend to do about this?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Government sympathizes with the people of Murdochville. Second, three weeks ago I had a meeting with my colleague, the Quebec Minister of Mines. The Minister, in accordance with his responsibility for Quebec's natural resources, was negotiating with Noranda. He asked the Canadian Government, as part of the Ottawa-Quebec agreement on mining, to sharing 50 per cent of the cost of reimbursing the loan, since negotiations were going along those lines. I was delighted to be able to confirm the Canadian Government's interest in these negotiations and also our decision to pay 50 per cent of the cost of interest payments.

I can assure you that as far as the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is concerned, we have responded positively to Quebec's request.

[English]

## MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, I have to ask the Minister if it is sufficient simply to offer one's good intentions, or is it not necessary to take leadership in an area like this and try to create a situation, through economic development and progress, that will give to that community a chance for the future? Surely it is time the Government started to take that leadership instead of sitting back and letting the private sector take the lead all the time.

• (1440)

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, leadership for the Government does not mean doing something it should not do. The first responsibility of the Government is to recognize that natural resources are first the responsibility of the provinces. With that in mind we have always agreed to work with the Quebec Government because it is its responsibility first.

That is why Minister Savoie has had negotiations with Société Noranda. When we were asked to participate in that we responded positively. I do not think that leadership of the country means that we should go against provincial rights.