

*Oral Questions*

ly?" Our answer to that is that we will have to be assured that the whole thing will proceed.

**An hon. Member:** Ironclad guarantees.

**Mr. Trudeau:** I see the Tories are talking about ironclad.

**An hon. Member:** No; Lalonde did.

**Mr. Crosbie:** The iron duke did. Old iron head.

**Miss MacDonald:** He is just another Cromwell.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Yes, Madam Speaker, we will have to make the judgment that the guarantees are ironclad. When you can say an ironclad flip-flop, I am sure ironclad has a lot of meaning for a lot of people.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Especially you.

**Mr. Trudeau:** I heard the Leader of the Opposition use that expression, "ironclad flip-flop". Madam Speaker, I am saying to this House that we will have to have that assurance.

**An hon. Member:** That is Liberalism.

**Mr. Trudeau:** That is why the decision we have to take is a very difficult one. I am thankful for the interest of the House. At least the position of the NDP is very clear; they do not care about the jobs. But the position of the Tories is not always clear.

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**TRANSPORT**

## INQUIRY AS TO ESTABLISHMENT OF MERCHANT MARINE

**Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport, who seems to be temporarily out of his seat.

**Mr. Crosbie:** He is temporarily dislocated.

**An hon. Member:** He has gone on the blink.

**Miss MacDonald:** He is off the rails.

**Mr. Howie:** In view of Canada's continuing balance of payments difficulties, impending cargo restrictions and the underemployment of Canadian seamen and shipworkers, when will the minister take a decision on the establishment of a Canadian merchant marine, which has the potential of being one of Canada's great industries?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, the idea has been around for some time. It has been debated. It is debated more now than it was. I understand that there are continuous meetings between ship owners and shippers to develop ideas. Personally, my view is that it should develop on a progressive basis.

At the moment there are a number of possibilities being explored. One of the most plausible or productive is the export of oil to Mexico. There are a number of companies interested in that now. I am aware, and I am pushing and doing my best to support efforts in that direction.

**Mr. Howie:** I had hoped that where a general policy decision had been taken by the former government, the minister might be able to give us a definite date when he could make a decision on the principle.

Does the minister have under active consideration a proposal to close the Canadian Arctic north of 60 to all but Canadian-built or registered ships within the next five years? If so, when does he contemplate taking a decision on this matter? Is this decision part of the comparable program to replace the 20 per cent subsidy on shipbuilding in Canadian shipyards? Is it related?

**Mr. Pepin:** Madam Speaker, I cannot answer the hon. member's question; I need more information.

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**FISHERIES**

## FUTURE OF FISHING VESSEL SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**Mr. Mel Gass (Malpeque):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and it concerns the vitally important question of the future of the fishing vessel subsidy program.

This year the minister is operating with an unusually high carryover in his vessel subsidy program due to a number of reasons, the main one being the difficulty the Newfoundland loan board had last year. Because of this high carryover the minister will be unable to approve any new subsidies for this year.

Since the minister indicated that he was attempting to secure additional funding for the program from his colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, so that the program could continue, could he inform the House, today, how successful he has been in securing additional funding for vessel subsidies, so that the fishermen of Atlantic Canada may know what the federal government's intentions are for the subsidy program this year?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Madam Speaker, we are having trouble with the vessel subsidy program because of a decision by the previous government of which the hon. member was a supporter: that was to leave in the estimates for the current year the sum of \$2 million, which in fact only covers the carryover from levels of funding which had been \$10 million two years ago and some \$8 million last year. Obviously, there was a carryover which has to be covered.

The previous government decided to do away with the vessel subsidy program. The budget of the former minister of finance of the Tory party suggested a plan which was very helpful to