

Oral Questions

unwilling or unable to give, to critical trade skills to meet the very important labour market demand that we know will come from various parts of Canada, particularly from the large mega projects in western Canada.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**OWNERSHIP OF GEORGES BANK—LEASES FOR OFFSHORE DRILLING**

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs of which I have given very brief general notice. The reason I have given very brief notice is partly because of the serious questions that came earlier today with regard to Iran, and also the very serious question involving our external affairs position, particularly and specifically with relation to Georges Bank, because of the preoccupation, understandably, of the United States and other countries with the Iranian situation—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: If members opposite do not care about the Georges Bank situation, they had better leave this House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: This is just taking time away from you.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nowlan: Can the minister please advise the House with regard to this situation very soon, definitely before December 17 when leases will be auctioned off in the United States for drilling rights on Georges Bank, where we do not even have an agreement as to who owns Georges Bank? Will our protest be made very clear to the American government regarding leasing rights and drilling rights before we clear up the jurisdictional problem of who owns it, because of danger to the fish and the question of jurisdiction?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should make it clear that the leases for drilling which are under discussion all lie within the United States jurisdiction of the Georges Bank. They are in the United States area. The leases were first supposed to be let on November 5, but were held up for a 40-day period as a result of court action initiated by the state of Maine and the state of Massachusetts.

My officials and officials of my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, are in constant communication with our American counterparts to ensure that there are adequate safeguards as far as conservation and any damage to the environment is concerned in this drilling area. At the present time, we are satisfied that such safeguards exist. However, if we are led to believe that there should be further examination, we will very definitely be expressing our concern to the American officials.

[Mr. Atkey.]

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILL ESTABLISH SAWMILL IN PORT CARTIER**

Mr. André Maltais (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion and deals with the situation in Port Cartier. I would like to know whether the minister has received a letter from a group of citizens of the region who have decided to invest \$100,000 to open a sawmill in that town to try to replace the Rayonier-Québec Company. People responsible for that project have asked to meet the minister and some of his officials to make a technical study of the briefs. So my question to the minister is this: Does he intend to follow up the suggestions made by the developers of this sawmill in Port Cartier and when does he intend to answer the letter sent to him on November 19 by people from Port Cartier.

[English]

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I will give the assurance to my colleague that I will be pleased to follow up the suggestions. If anyone seeks a meeting, I will arrange that. The hon. member would certainly be most welcome at the meeting.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS**DISCREPANCY IN SOLUTION OF DANGER INHERENT IN 1.5 LITRE BOTTLES**

Mr. Gary F. McCauley (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs concerning a solution to the problem of 1.5 litre bottles. My question arises from a conflict which I detect between the minister and his deputy.

The minister informed me that one of the Japanese coating techniques has been found to be most suitable in terms of film performance and cost factors. However, the minister added in his letter to me that before making a final decision on the adoption of an offshore product, a Canadian process which recently surfaced is presently being considered. This morning, at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs—

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. member has a question, he should put it.

Mr. McCauley: —deputy minister informed me that there is, in fact, no Canadian process being considered. I ask the minister if he can explain this discrepancy.

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Solicitor General and Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in any case of a dispute between a minister and a deputy, the minister is right. The hon. member knows that.