

Canadian jurisdiction exercised over a situation that involves the loss of Canadian lives. It was known that a U.S. coast guard commander, who inspected the *Ocean Ranger* two years ago, is quoted as saying that another routine inspection was two months overdue. My question to whichever minister is accepting responsibility is: why was it two months overdue? What was the Government of Canada doing to ensure the safety of Canadian lives?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, there are at least ten different inspection certificates for a rig such as this. Most of those certificates are issued by the American Bureau of Shipping. These certificates deal with safety of construction, the international load line, and a number of other subjects. According to certain reports it appears that the certificate of the inspection that is carried out by the U.S. coast guard had not been renewed before the expiry of the previous one. No doubt this is a matter the commission of inquiry, which the government has announced it will create, will want to examine. At the present time I have no information to provide the hon. member other than what is already public.

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, what the minister has confirmed is that the Government of Canada has been exercising no jurisdiction, nor official interest, over the safety of Canadian lives, 83 or 84 of which have been lost. That is what the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has said.

DEPARTMENTAL JURISDICTION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Transport. I refer to the document cited by my colleague, a report on an evaluation of search and rescue. Not to get confused here about a conflict of jurisdiction between governments, on the basis of this report there is clearly a very serious confusion within the federal government itself. Will the Minister of Transport give us an assurance now that this confusion will not continue to put more Canadian lives at risk?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, on the subject of inspection, that is not what the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said. There has been inspection by his department on that rig.

Mr. Lalonde: Every two weeks.

Mr. Pepin: Every two weeks, I am informed.

On the subject of division of responsibility between departments, I think there is an inevitability about it. The only alternative would be to put everything under the jurisdiction of a single department of government.

There will always be a division of labour between the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Transport on matters of transportation. The implication should not be that there will come a day when everything can be put in one department.

Oral Questions

The question is really, is the co-ordination among different departments, good enough? Between the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Transport on the matter of search and rescue there is a good working relationship. That it can still be improved is beyond doubt, and efforts are made to that effect.

The report which has been leaked by a dedicated civil servant, who felt the world was waiting for his brown envelope—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: Very funny.

Mr. Pepin: —at a certain hour last night, indicates only—no, no, this is not funny—that efforts are made to improve that co-ordination. The group in question in the Secretariat of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and National Defence came up with ideas on the subject that are being reviewed now, and departments and ministers will soon be made acquainted with these views.

● (1425)

SAFETY INSPECTOR'S REPORTS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): I trust the minister did not intend to joke about a situation which has cost—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: No, no.

Mr. Lawrence: Well, what was he doing, then, if he was not joking?

Mr. Clark: I say this seriously. I trust the minister did not intend to joke about a situation which has resulted in the loss of 84 lives. I hope the minister will deal directly with the urgency of ensuring that confusion within the federal government, which may have led to this loss of life, will be stopped before it leads to the loss of any lives in the future.

Let me ask a question of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources whose inspectors were there for a limited purpose. In answer to a question I asked yesterday about inspection into ballast problems, the minister indicated that he would inform me about the contents of the reports on the inspections which had been carried out. I would like to have that information, but I would also like to know whether the safety inspector from his department was only on the *Ocean Ranger* to assess the safety of the drill hole and was not there to inspect the safety or seaworthiness of the drilling rig.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): The Leader of the Opposition asked me for information yesterday. I have that particular information, the two reports of the safety inspections which took place in the last month. An inspection takes place every two weeks. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to read these reports I would be happy to table them when we come to tabling of documents.