

*Oral Questions***EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****TRANSFER OF CANADIAN FROM NEW JERSEY JAIL TO
CANADIAN PENITENTIARY**

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the nightmare for Bruce Curtis, the young Nova Scotian, and his family, is beginning to come to an end. I rise today to congratulate all Members of this House who supported the efforts of Jim and Alice Curtis to have their son Bruce transferred from a prison in New Jersey to a Canadian penitentiary. Last Friday, Governor Kean of New Jersey announced that Bruce Curtis would be transferred to a Canadian penal institution as a humanitarian gesture.

I would also like to acknowledge the excellent work of Serge Boudreau, from the Department of the Solicitor General, and Murio Lapointe, from the Department of External Affairs. Both of these government employees were very helpful in expediting this particular matter.

Unusual as it may seem, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) as well as the Solicitor General of Canada (Mr. Kelleher). Their efforts, and the pressure they were able to put upon the Government of the United States, particularly the U.S. administration as well as the State Government in New Jersey, have made this possible. To them and to all Members who assisted in this particular plight, I say thank you most sincerely.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ENERGY**BEAUFORT SEA DRILLING ACTIVITY—UNITED STATES SALE OF
LEASES**

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Late last week the U.S. Department of the Interior issued a final notice of sale for leases in the Beaufort Sea. Bids will be received up until March 15 of this year. Included in this notice of sale are 22 blocks within the Canadian jurisdiction. In other words, a United States agency is now putting up for bid, drilling on Canadian territory, in a unilateral fashion. Does the Government of Canada not consider this to be a serious encroachment on Canada's sovereignty?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, without accepting the premise of the question, I will certainly take this matter under advisement and raise it with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It has not been drawn to my attention, but I will certainly refer it to the Minister and get back to the Member as soon as I can.

Mr. Axworthy: May I just say in response, Mr. Speaker, that I am a little surprised that neither the Prime Minister nor the Deputy Prime Minister would be advised about a fairly serious action on behalf of the U.S. Government on Canadian territory.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT PROTEST TO UNITED STATES

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I will direct my question to either of the two gentlemen. Several months ago when I raised a similar question with the Secretary of State for External Affairs, he said there would be no action taken by the U.S. Government until the dispute over that territory was resolved. We now have a U.S. order stating that the bids will be open until March 15 and that the United States will determine when it is in its own best interests to do so, to accept those bids.

Will the Government ask the United States administration for a clear statement on what its policy intends to be? And will it not issue immediately a notice of protest that this is a very clear infringement on our sovereignty in a place where we thought we had some agreement that the United States would not continue this kind of action?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, it was for that very purpose I took the question as notice, because this matter has come up before and there was a clear understanding that there would be no such action, as outlined by the Member, taking place in the disputed area. That has been the situation. That was outlined by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and confirmed by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The reason I said I would undertake to look into this matter is simply the fact that very rarely has the Member his facts straight, so I would not want to accept the premise upon which the question is based.

• (1420)

CANADIAN POSITION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I am not asking the Minister to accept my facts. I have here the statement of a bid of order from the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Minister may want to have his officials examine that document.

The question I raise is the following. In December, 1986 I raised a question with the Secretary of State and was given some assurances. Last September, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys, raised a similar question. The Secretary of State also gave assurances that time. After each assurance the United States proceeds to go ahead and unilaterally act as if that territory is its own.

When do we stop getting assurances, and when do we start getting some action on behalf of the Government to defend a very valuable part of Canadian territory? When can we expect Government to start standing up for the country?