

Oral Questions

portray this, this government has chosen to ignore a panel of experts.

I ask the minister again, why would the public have any faith in any environmental process that this government undertakes when it refuses to listen to its own hand-picked experts? What confidence can he expect the public to have, whether it is aboriginal people or other groups, in the process of this government?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, again I believe this is a perfect case of selective interpretation of a report. Again on page 6 of the same report, the panel's "less preferred second recommendation is offered because the proponent has shown some efforts at mitigation and because acceptance of the first recommendation may lead to insurmountable inter-jurisdictional conflicts".

• (1130)

The chairman of the panel said on national TV last night that this is a recommendation that is pragmatic because it is enforceable as the other would probably not be enforceable.

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WESTRAY MINE

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

The premier of Nova Scotia has publicly stated that he asked the Prime Minister of Canada to intervene to keep the Westray proposal alive. The premier said: "There is no question I expressed my concerns to the Prime Minister. There is no question that I made representations to him".

There is no question that the Prime Minister of Canada himself was intimately involved in the approval of this project. I ask the Deputy Prime Minister: what was the Prime Minister's role? What did the Prime Minister of Canada do to see this project through?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is overlooking the fact that public spokesmen, leaders at the municipal level, provincial level, members of Parliament, many people were interested in economic development in that part of Nova Scotia.

Stellarton area had high unemployment. The whole region of Central Nova had high unemployment. We believe in regional economic development and so does the province. This particular project, which was going to contribute directly 240 jobs and a multiplier that could be two, three or four times that is a very, very important regional economic development instrument.

Therefore, many municipal leaders, many wardens and mayors came forward and supported this project. It is not unusual that they do because of the economic strength that this particular project could bring to the region.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is again to the Deputy Prime Minister.

We are not talking about a municipal politician. We are not talking about company representatives. We are talking about the involvement of the Prime Minister of Canada in the approval of this project.

Wednesday, May 20 in the Nova Scotia legislature, Premier Donald Cameron stated: "What the Prime Minister did after I spoke to him, you would have to ask him. I cannot answer for the Prime Minister".

In the absence of the Prime Minister, I once again ask the Deputy Prime Minister: what was the response? What role did the Prime Minister of Canada play in the Westray mine decision?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, the hon. gentleman does not like the fact that there was a mine begun in Pictou country. He is not alone. There are a number of people from Cape Breton who felt the same way.

Let me tell you who agreed with the development of this particular regional economic development project: Hank Dunnewold, the warden of the municipality of Pictou County.

There was Barry Trenholm, mayor of the town of Trenton; Ronald Marks, mayor of the town of Stellarton, and in a letter to the Prime Minister: D. Hugh MacGregor, chairman of the Pictou County Research and Development Commission; Dan Currie, mayor of the township of Pictou; Clarence Porter, ex-mayor of the town of Stellarton; Mary Daley, mayor of the town of Westphal; J. H. MacLean, mayor of the town of New Glasgow.