

Government decides whether it will play its part in banning the drilling for gas and oil on Georges Bank.

Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that the Government of Nova Scotia and the Government of New Brunswick have both taken a position opposed to drilling on Georges Bank, that the office of the Governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, has taken the same position, and that the Nova Scotia Legislature has unanimously passed a resolution calling for the banning of drilling on Georges Bank?

In light of that, is the Deputy Prime Minister prepared on behalf of the federal Government to amend Bill C-75 to ban drilling on George's Bank?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that discussions and consultations are still ongoing between the federal Government and the Province of Nova Scotia. I certainly take the Hon. Member's representation into consideration and will see that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources receives it.

GOVERNMENT DECISION—TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, the Nova Scotia Legislature passed a unanimous resolution supported by all Parties opposing drilling in that region. Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that the GOMAC report, the Gulf of Maine Advisory Committee report, has recommended no drilling in the area and that the report is in the possession of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans? Is he aware of that information and, if so, when can the people of Nova Scotia expect a decision from the Government of Canada in light of the fact that their own Legislature is unanimous on this issue?

• (1450)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): I would hope very soon, Mr. Speaker, and again I will draw this matter to the attention of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

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FINANCE

CANADIAN EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM—REQUEST MADE BY SMALL COMPANIES

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The Minister will know that the small producers in the oil and gas sector are not enjoying the benefits the Minister, I am sure, would like them to have. They have requested that under the Canadian Exploration and Development Incentive Program, the Government, on October 1, instead of reducing the rate from one third to one sixth, reduce the amount on

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which the average is based from \$10 million to \$5 million, thereby ensuring that the small companies receive the benefit they received in the past.

Will the Minister of Finance, in the interests of safeguarding these companies and safeguarding jobs in the oil and gas sector, agree to the request of the small companies?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Hon. Member has raised this issue because I think he will agree with me it has been quite an effective incentive for the oil and gas industry, particularly for these smaller companies, members of the Small Explorers and Producers Association. We have received the representations of the association. I am always happy to receive these representations, and will be reviewing them in due course.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): With all due respect to the Minister, the question is fairly straightforward and the timing is very important because they are now planning for the exploration and development they are going to be doing in the next few months. Why can the Minister not say now whether the Government is going to grant their request, in the interests of helping small companies in the energy sector?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think my answer is any different. I appreciate the Hon. Member's concerns and I will take them under advisement.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF SECRETARY OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF MEXICO

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of Members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Bernardo Sepulveda, Secretary of External Relations of Mexico.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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AGRICULTURE

GRAIN—INITIAL PRICES FOR 1988-89 CROP YEAR

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds. Western farmers are in the process of making crop decisions for 1988. They need some information in order to do that. Is the Minister prepared to make a statement now on the initial prices farmers can expect for the 1988-89 crop year?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, traditionally initial payments are