

Oral Questions

prevent it. These ideas are studied, and answers are provided. There are budget considerations, and some ideas are not considered acceptable, again from that point of view. I will look into this and make sure my hon. friend receives the full explanation he is seeking.

ALARM SOUNDED ONE WEEK PRIOR TO SINKING

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Transport. There are press reports today that the alarm on the *Ocean Ranger* was sounded last week because the rig was listing 15 degrees. Indeed, the order was given to abandon ship. In view of the tragic loss of life and the fact that the "unsinkable" *Ocean Ranger* has in fact sunk, has the minister's department investigated that alarm and its cause, and is he now able to report to the House?

● (1420)

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am informed that an inspector from the Canada Oil and Gas Act land administration did inspect the platform in the last two weeks. I do not have a copy of that report and I cannot give any particular information in that respect.

Mr. McGrath: Madam Speaker, although the minister did not give an undertaking, I presume he will report to the House.

POSSIBLE DEPLOYMENT OF FIXED WING AIRCRAFT IN NEWFOUNDLAND BY DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence. Whilst it is too early to come to any conclusions on this tragedy, which we all regret very much, nevertheless I must avail myself of this opportunity to remind the minister that he has recommendations from within his department for greater deployment of fixed wing aircraft within the Atlantic provinces, and specifically that they be based in Gander in order to respond to situations that may develop in the offshore. I am not in a position to say whether that was a factor or not. I merely want to ask the minister if the government has made any decision with respect to the deployment of fixed wing aircraft in the northwest Atlantic, specifically Newfoundland, so that they can respond with minimum lead time and effect rescue which would, of course, ultimately be carried out by helicopter.

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I am well aware of the recommendations mentioned by the hon. member and we have taken them into consideration. No decision has been made yet on the question of positioning fixed wing aircraft in Newfoundland. I know the hon. member's concern about what has just happened and what could happen in Newfoundland coastal waters.

I was aware of this accident very early this morning and I would like to stress the fact that there is no question of a lack

of resources in this case. We must take into consideration that this happened about 200 kilometres from the coast, in 50-foot seas, and in weather conditions that meant that even our best aircraft and our best resources could not be of help.

I will take the comments of the hon. member into consideration and see what we can do in the future.

JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour which pertains to the same subject. As the minister is aware, early this morning the drill rig *Ocean Ranger* was heavily damaged in a storm, with an unknown number of lives being lost. This afternoon we have heard a jurisdictional dispute over the responsibility of various departments.

Could the minister tell the House whether the drill rig fell under the jurisdiction of the federal or provincial government in terms of occupational health and safety, and could he tell us specifically if federal inspectors regularly visit these rigs?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker—

An hon. Member: Where is the Minister of Labour?

Mr. Lalonde: The responsibility in this regard belongs to the federal government, the federal Parliament. Indeed, as I indicated previously, an inspector visited that rig recently.

Mr. Benjamin: Which department?

INQUIRY RESPECTING SAFETY REGULATIONS

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, we had an accident at Christmastime which is under investigation. Now we have another serious accident. I think it is time this House was told where the jurisdiction lies. We are talking about the lives of individual workers.

I should like to ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources what department has jurisdiction and what kind of safety regulations are in place to ensure that lives are not lost at sea.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, there is great concern about an incident like this—indeed, a tragedy like this. I should like to refer my friend to the Canada Oil and Gas drilling regulations that are in effect at the present time. When Bill C-48 is proclaimed the responsibilities provided by that act will be fully applied.