

on the furniture industry, and since then that industry, which is the main industry of the region, is facing increasingly serious difficulties, particularly due to imports and the need for industries to market their products in common. Could the minister tell the House if he has had time, since the seminar, to make a very careful examination of that problem, and has he already worked out ways to help those companies?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, we asked for a report on the situation of the furniture industry and the hon. member, who was with me in Victoriaville, knows that the report was already examined jointly by officials of my department and the members of the Quebec Furniture Manufacturers' Association but I have had no final answer as yet. However, as soon as that study is completed, it will be a pleasure for me to inform the hon. member.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I understand the minister's position but he will also understand the importance of this question on a situation which becomes worse each day. Would the minister be prepared to have a civil servant of his department get in touch as soon as possible with the leaders of the Quebec Furniture Manufacturers' Association to take stock of what happened since the workshop and take urgent action in this area if possible?

Mr. Chrétien: I shall be pleased to do so, Mr. Speaker.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF DELEGATION FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRANCE

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before recognizing another hon. member, I want to mention the presence in the gallery of the French delegation to the 11th meeting of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association, headed by a member of the National Assembly, Mr. Émile Bizet.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY

PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED STATES TO INCLUDE SALTWATER BODIES WITHIN TREATY

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It relates to the problem of transboundary pollution. My concern arises from the imminent danger of United States-Canada conflicts over oil tanker traffic into Cherry Point and the extension of Dome's drilling permit in the Beaufort Sea. Will the minister give urgent consideration to opening negotiations with the United States on the extension of the definition of boundary waters in the International Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to include saltwater bodies, such as the Strait of Juan de Fuca, through which the Canada-U.S. boundary passes?

Oral Questions

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the hon. member is more familiar with the treaty concerned and the arrangement than I am. I will certainly take this under advisement. In the meantime, I can advise him, as I advised the House last week, that there are quite comprehensive negotiations underway with the United States on a variety of issues related to the problem he has cited.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POSSIBILITY OF COMPENSATION FROM UNITED STATES TO CANADIANS SUFFERING FROM OIL SPILL DAMAGE

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): On May 19 I asked the Acting Prime Minister to investigate interim compensation provisions for Canadian victims of pollution of our west coast by United States. On June 2, my colleague, the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs a question and he replied that he would have an answer ready for us the next day. I now ask the minister, will Canadian victims of oil spill damage be eligible for compensation under United States legislation and has or will the government of Canada make representation to the United States government to this effect or bring in comparable compensation legislation to protect the fisheries and foreshore of British Columbia?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I say once again, with the greatest of respect for the hon. member's justifiable concern, that obviously an answer given orally on this may well lead to some misunderstanding in the event of claims and so on. I would prefer if the hon. member and others who have asked this question would agree that I provide a written answer which would be the considered response. I think it is now in the process of preparation. If not, I will see that it is done immediately.

CANADA-UNITED STATES INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP MEETING ON OIL SPILLS ON PACIFIC COAST—REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, will the Secretary of State for External Affairs say whether he has had any kind of a report, even an informal one, from the recent meeting in Victoria of the Canada-U.S. interparliamentary group when they were considering this very important matter of oil spills in that area? They made the recommendation that a joint approach be made possible, even a joint bilateral agreement covering such matters as clean-up facilities properly located, a multi-million dollar compensation fund, the question of liability, traffic controls, construction and crewing standards, not to mention research into oil carriage technologies as they might affect the choice of oil ports. If he has not heard, is he prepared to react to this mini-report which I have just given him?