

### POLLUTION

#### OIL SPILL FROM MOTOR VESSEL "MINNA"—MEASURES TO CONTROL DAMAGE

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of the Environment which relates to the question of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the oil spill from the motor vessel *Minna* under charter to the oceanographic service and which ran aground in Brewer Bay off Resolution Island on August 18. In view of the fact that the crew and scientific equipment were removed on August 21 and the vessel declared abandoned at that time, why was the supply of light diesel fuel not also removed then, or in the intervening six weeks, so that the present damaging oil spill could have been avoided?

**Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, there were attempts to empty the ship's fuel oil but they were unsuccessful. This is quite understandable and is one of the reasons for which the ship went aground. The sea in that region is very active. It was impossible to remove the oil, which of course was the responsibility of the owners of the ship. At that time DOE was not responsible for the ship but felt it had a moral responsibility to insist that attempts be made to remove the oil. That has not been possible.

Our assessment is that damage to the environment will be minimal because the sea is active and the oil will be flushed out to sea. Since it is light fuel oil it will be rapidly emulsified and evaporated.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Prince George-Peace River may ask a final supplementary.

**Mr. Oberle:** Mr. Speaker, if the responsibility lies with the owners of the ship, has the government taken any action to ask the owners to provide for cleaning up? I cannot agree with the minister that because of the lightness of the oil there is no damage.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. It would be preferable if we simply confine ourselves to questions, especially when we are well down the line in supplementaries. I thought the question was clearly put; perhaps the minister would answer.

**Mrs. Sauvé:** Mr. Speaker, we did try to take measures to avoid damage, but the damage is minimal. We knew that the only thing to do in a case like this was to hope the oil would be washed out to sea, and this is what will happen. It will evaporate in a matter of weeks, and this is the best way to deal with that particular situation.

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### INDIAN AFFAIRS

#### REQUEST OF INDIAN BROTHERHOOD FOR MEETING WITH CABINET—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Prime Minister. In view of the request of the National Indian Brotherhood representing some 300,000 registered Indians for a meeting with the

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cabinet and the Prime Minister to deal with the urgent problems facing the native peoples of Canada in a co-operative atmosphere, will the Prime Minister arrange to meet this request and agree to the interview proposed?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I will consider the matter very seriously, and if a meeting is arranged I will let the House know.

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### TRADE

#### ALLEGED DETERIORATION OF CANADA'S TRADE BALANCE—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO RECTIFY

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Since Statistics Canada stated on September 27 that during the first eight months of the year real exports from Canada had decreased by 5 per cent compared with the same eight month period the year before, and that during the first eight months real imports to Canada had increased by 4 per cent, would the minister take the first opportunity on motions to outline to the House what steps he and his department plan to take to overcome this serious and continuing deterioration of our trade balance?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is well aware, the strength of Canadian exports depends very much on the health of foreign economies and the willingness and ability of our foreign customers to buy. Unfortunately, foreign economies have not been as strong as the Canadian economy. Our exports have not increased as fast as our imports, and that is the reason for the figures the hon. member has just given the House. At the same time, I should like to assure the House that Canadian exports are very strong, and are up 26 per cent this year.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Gillespie:** Also, Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I should like to make this further comment. We will be seeking in all manner of ways to liberalize world trade, and it is particularly significant that in the Speaker's gallery today is the director general of GATT—the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade—who is visiting Ottawa, Mr. Olivier Long. We welcome him to Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Hees:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister not aware that the real figures I have indicated, as expressed by Statistics Canada, show what the true picture is? They take the exports and imports in dollar value and subtract the inflation figure from them, which leaves the real picture. The picture that I have given is that given by Statistics Canada, showing that exports have been decreasing and imports increasing.

**Mr. Gillespie:** I should like to reassure the hon. member that Canada is continuing to run a favourable trade balance.