

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Be honest, John.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): And the only noise we hear in this House is the flapping of the fins of the trained seals behind the Deputy Prime Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition would put his question. Thank you.

GOVERNMENT ACTION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of empty wind and fin-flapping over there.

An Hon. Member: Be careful now.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Deputy Prime Minister may feel temporarily secure in the numbers behind him, but the people of Canada do not feel secure in the way his Government is protecting our sovereignty. That is quite clear.

What specific action will the Government take to prevent the French from exercising pseudo-sovereignty rights over Canadian waters? When, how, and what action will be taken?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I know it is encouraging for all Members of the House to notice that the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition can rally his troops over something.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1425)

Mr. Mazankowski: We hope that that might enhance his own personal security because many of us are very concerned about his own personal security.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: My colleagues behind me are saying that they want the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition to stay.

Some of the—

Mr. Rossi: We're not sure that Canadians want you though.

Ms. Copps: Bring back Erik.

Mr. Shields: Oh, Sheila, be quiet.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister could get to the answer to the question.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition has gotten carried away with some of his rhetoric. He may want to go back to check what he has said because some of the things he said are totally inaccurate.

As I said earlier, we are talking about a disputed area, and under both Canadian law and international law the activities related to exploration and exploitation of natural resources undertaken on the Canadian shelf can only be undertaken with the express consent of the Canadian Government.

RIGHTS OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, the Atlantic Accord was supposed to give to Newfoundland, not France, the right to drill and explore in the waters off Newfoundland out to the 200-mile limit. Now the French Government, apparently over the objections of the Canadian Government, has issued drilling permits to two companies in France allowing them to drill out to 200 miles and to as close as 30 miles of the Newfoundland coast.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the Government will do to end once, and for all, the issuing of these permits by the French Government in order to live up to the spirit of the Atlantic Accord and protect the rights of Newfoundlanders?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think I have already answered that question. I indicated that a formal protest has been launched. The Prime Minister of France and the Prime Minister of Canada met earlier today and I am sure this was a matter that was discussed.

I should indicate as well that Canadian petroleum companies too have been granted permits in this disputed area. Really what is happening here is that both countries, because it is a disputed area, have been granting permits. However, as of yet, no drilling has taken place by either side.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, it does not matter if it is France or the United States, if it is fish, lumber or oil, the word is out: this Government is made up of a bunch of pushovers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker: Does the Deputy Prime Minister not realize that in this case France is taunting Canada? We announced 7,000 metric tonnes of fish for next year for France. Two weeks ago France announced it would catch 27,000 metric tonnes. As the Deputy Prime Minister has said, we say no to the drilling and France now says yes to the drilling in Canadian waters. Will the Government simply sit back and watch as the French fill their bellies with our fish and their tanks with our oil?