

Oral Questions

Mr. Alexander: He said "yes".

Mr. Marchand: Well, if he said "yes", that sounds like a good idea to me then.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS**POSSIBILITY DOME PETROLEUM WILL APPLY FOR EXTENSION OF DRILLING SEASON—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It concerns the proposal by Dome Petroleum, Ltd. to extend the drilling season applicable to its operations in the deep Beaufort Sea from the current 60-90 days to the full year. Will the minister tell the House whether he has been informed of the proposal, and in addition, when he expects to receive a formal application for this extension? Will he assure the House that before considering the application a full environmental assessment will be carried out by Environment Canada?

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have not yet had—

An hon. Member: The question was not directed to you.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, my colleague was responding to the third part of the question, and I think he answered it. As to the first and second parts of the question, I have been informed they will probably make a request for an extension of the drilling season. I have not yet received that request, but I expect to receive it some time this month.

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TRANSPORT**SUGGESTION DEPARTMENT LEASING ICEBREAKER FROM DOME PETROLEUM**

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Transport. There are also indications that the Department of Transport is now negotiating with Dome Petroleum over possible leasing of the \$125 million icebreaker which Dome will be building to enable its year-round drilling program to take place. Will the minister tell the House whether these negotiations are taking place and whether or not it is government policy to support in principle the construction of this vessel?

● (1432)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): There have been discussions about the possible development of such an icebreaker and the government's role in relation to it. It has been the government's view, and certainly mine as Minister of

[Mr. Marchand.]

Transport, that an icebreaker of this type is very useful for our many national interests in the north and so we are interested in this one as well and are pursuing the matter with that thought in mind.

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INCOME TAX**BREACHES OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF TAX RETURNS—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON INVESTIGATION**

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. In view of the fact that last Friday the minister indicated that he was not aware of any breaches in his department's security which would make it possible for an individual posing as a chartered accountant to call up a regional office of the tax department to request personal information about an individual's tax return without his authorisation, may I ask the minister whether in the past four days he has conducted any further investigations with members of his staff and can he report to the House on whether he has discovered any instances of such practices having taken place?

Hon. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the investigation is going ahead exceptionally well but I will not make any report until it is completed.

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**USE OF SIN AS IDENTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IN COMPUTER—POSSIBILITY OF RECONSIDERATION**

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): My supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Justice. In view of the fact that the revelations of the past week have convinced virtually everyone except the Minister of National Revenue of the fact that it is very easy to breach the security of the tax department, may I ask the Minister of Justice what steps are being taken by the government to tighten up security in other departments which hold personal information in their files, private, confidential information, about individuals, and in particular is the government reconsidering its use of social insurance numbers as the single identification number for the coding of personal information about individuals in their computer files?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of National Revenue made clear on Thursday, steps have been taken to increase the security provisions relating to the Department of National Revenue. With regard to the question of the single use of SIN, a committee has been operating with the government for some time examining the use of SIN. That committee report is a matter for the President of the Treasury Board to deal with.