

● (1425)

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I will direct my other questions to the minister of the environment, whom I presume has the fundamental responsibility. First, where are the 3,500 tons of missing oil? Does the minister have any evidence to suggest that that oil is some distance below the surface but not deep enough to have jelled? Have his officials alerted him to the possibility of this oil slick being submerged, as it apparently is, and creating environmental damage to the fishery or the shoreline of Cape Breton?

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)): Mr. Speaker, we really have not been able to find where the spilled oil has gone. I can assure the hon. member that no oil has drifted on to shore. The best information I have is that there is not likely to be any environmental damage from the oil that has been spilled.

I mentioned yesterday that a small patch had been found in the vicinity of where the stern was then positioned. I should have said that patch was seen near where the bow was located at that point. I have had other reports today indicating that there have been a further few, very small patches found but nothing to be concerned about. As I said before, we still do not know where the bulk of the bunker C has gone.

Mr. Forrestall: Is the minister suggesting that his environmental officials, including those on the scene, have briefed him to the effect that the missing 3,500 tons of oil does not pose a potential threat? If that is not the case, what action is being taken today, either by surface or aerial means, to locate and identify the missing 3,500 tons? Can he, further, advise where the bow section is at present, who has it under tow and whether it is, in fact, leaking oil?

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, according to my information to bow section is not leaking oil. It is located about 97 miles east of the entrance to Chedabucto Bay. Perhaps that kind of question should more properly be addressed to the Minister of Transport. It is in a holding pattern. There are very difficult weather conditions now, but hopefully action will be taken in the next couple of days to move it into deeper water where we can probably sink it.

The surveillance action now being taken is really only by coastguard vessels in the area. The weather has been too difficult to get into the area our aircraft which is equipped with remote sensing equipment. As soon as weather conditions permit, the DC-3 will again be out and with its various kinds of sensing equipment will try to locate any oil that might be on the high seas.

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LOTO CANADA

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE STUDY OF OPERATIONS

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport). In view

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of the continuing problems with Loto Canada, can she tell the House if and when she plans to seek a reference of Loto Canada to the appropriate standing committee in order that its officials may appear and be questioned by members of the House respecting the whole operation of the corporation?

Hon. Iona Campagnolo (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I do not know of any continuing problems with Loto Canada. The hon. member and his steering committee have the same rights as any members of this House to call the annual report when it comes through. My officials will be very pleased to appear before the committee, which they were not called upon to do last year.

Mr. Halliday: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Deputy Prime Minister. In view of the unusual financial losses recently experienced by Loto Canada and the predicted drop in ticket sales for the twelfth draw, will the Deputy Prime Minister use his influence and try to obtain the appropriate reference to a standing committee of the House in order that the entire financial affairs of Loto Canada may be subjected to scrutiny in the usual parliamentary fashion?

● (1430)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, without accepting any of the allegations to be found in the hon. member's question, I will take his representation under consideration and decide whether at the present time we can add a further burden to the already very busy House committees.

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EMPLOYMENT

OVERPAYMENTS IN CERTAIN JOB CREATION PROGRAMS— GOVERNMENT POSITION ON COLLECTION

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. As reported in *Hansard* at page 4093, the Minister of Employment and Immigration confirmed in an answer to me that overpayments had taken place in connection with LIP, The Canada Works scheme and the Young Canada Works scheme. Subsequently, I asked the President of the Treasury Board what position was being taken by his department with regard to these overpayments.

Has the minister been able to check into this situation as he promised to do, and does his department regard these overpayments as debts due to the Crown?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (President of Treasury Board): Government policy with regard to this matter is quite clear. It is our intention to pursue any of these outstanding obligations which are in the category of legal obligations due to the Crown. We shall pursue those that fall within this category as far as we can through the various processes open to us.