

MISCHIEF

Meanwhile a row broke out today in the wake of the sinking.

SNP leader Alex Salmond has called for the resignation of Tayside North MP Bill Walker over comments he allegedly made during a BBC Scotland radio programme.

But Mr Walker hit back accusing his critics of "mischief-making" and "taking comments out of context".

Mr Walker is said to have claimed on Speaking Out that fishing is a risky profession and incidents like the Antares tragedy, are simply one of the risks of the job which have to be accepted.

DANGER

Mr Salmond said today: "Bill Walker's comments were quite disgraceful and unworthy of a man in his position.

"Fishermen take great risks on every trip to sea but men who have fished these waters for generations should not have to face the additional danger caused by the Ministry of Defence submarines in the area."

EVENING TIMES

29/11/90.

Fishmen in call to make Clyde safer

FISHERMEN'S leaders today demanded new safety measures to stop any repetition of the Antares tragedy.

A delegation from the Clyde Fishermen's Association travelled to Edinburgh to press for improved safety measures for fishermen in the Firth of Clyde.

And they urged Lord Strathclyde, the Scottish Office Minister responsible for fisheries, to press the Ministry of Defence to stop all underwater submarine activity until new safety proposals had been agreed.

Fishermen have threatened to blockade the Royal Navy base at Faslane unless their demands are met.

Meanwhile the painstaking work of raising the Antares, sunk in an accident with a nuclear sub, continued off Arran today.

Navy salvage experts hope to attach cables to the wreck, allowing it to be towed to shallower water for inspection.

It is not known if any of the bodies of the four fishermen who drowned in the tragedy are still on board.

SCOTSMAN

29/11/90.

Safety device

Sir, — It is appalling, if true, that a £150,000 invention to prevent submarines from snagging trawlers' nets was turned down by the Government, mainly on grounds of cost. Some £11 billion has been spent on Trident, Britain's updated and vastly more lethal nuclear deterrent which is being pressed ahead even though, with the Cold War officially over, nothing is left for it to deter. Yet a paltry sum cannot be found to save the lives of fishermen operating over the submarine route along which a number of fishing boats have mysteriously vanished in a decade.

Ministry of Defence arrogance passes all bounds. It refuses to suspend submarine operations after the latest tragedy in which four died. It has so far ignored a High Court order to hand over submarine logs, obtained by the widow of a fisherman lost in 1988. In addition, the result of a select committee inquiry showing massive opposition to low-flying exercises has been an increase in low flying.

East European governments can no longer trample on public opinion in this way. How can it still happen here?

Tony Hughes

4 GLADSTONE TERRACE, EDINBURGH
24 NOVEMBER

Sir, — The tragic loss of the fishing boat Antares and her crew prompts a question about the status of submarine operations in coastal waters. The international regulation for the prevention of collision at sea place an absolute duty on masters of vessels to maintain an adequate look-out, to maintain a safe speed for the conditions and to take all possible steps to avoid collision. The rules do not specifically refer to submersible vessels, but they do rightly acknowledge the special circumstances of fishing vessels, generally requiring other vessels to give way to vessels engaged in fishing.

I am not a lawyer. But I do wonder how it is that a submerged vessel can possibly comply with these requirements. If Scottish fishermen were to seek a legal test, I would be delighted to support them.

Kenneth M McCulloch

15 ROYAL PARK TERRACE, EDINBURGH
27 NOVEMBER