

Oral Questions

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to the question is that in the interest of conservation, the Minister of Fisheries, in consultation with user groups and the provincial government, each year puts in a management plan for a variety of fisheries. This year a quota was put in place for area 2, that my hon. friend talks about. I remind him that last year the allowance was 300 and the catch was 225. The quota for this year, respecting the need for conservation based both on catch results and scientific information, is 200. The difference between the catch and the quota is a little over 10 per cent.

Nobody would want to deny any fishermen fish if it were not in the long-term interest of those fishermen and particularly the people of Labrador.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary will know that the user groups specifically asked for Labrador to be excluded from the conservation program. Indeed the government has made an allocation available to northern Labrador and not southern Labrador. The user groups are all for having an allocation for Labrador.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary a supplementary question. If the government is not prepared to rescind this Draconian measure, will he now say that the government is prepared to make available to those fishermen an income support program during the ice blockade, as there is adequate precedent for by past governments? Is he prepared to say that the government is prepared to move on that question and at least allow the fishermen of Labrador some income support?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of State (Youth), Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the hon. member who mentioned the ice blockade in Labrador that this is not a unique occurrence. I may remind him that in 1988, fishermen on the Labrador coast were unable to start fishing until the end of June. So this is not exactly unique, but we are monitoring the situation.

[*English*]

MEAT EXPORTS

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture.

According to industry sources, U.S. border inspection stations recently rejected 76 per cent of the meat from the province of Alberta slated that weekend for entering the United States, in spite of Canadian government quality approval.

The pork industry in Alberta claims that inspection harassment has increased significantly since the minister announced a pilot program with the U.S. on February 26 which he promised would eliminate this harassment.

When the minister met with the U.S. agriculture secretary on Monday, was he able to force the U.S. to back down on this import harassment which clearly contravenes both the free trade agreement and his own agreement with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, what is important is to remove the impediments and the harassment that has been going on. As a matter of fact, as a result of the arrangement that was made between the Secretary of Agriculture and the Government of Canada, that process is taking place.

Obviously, there is a requirement for a notification process to change the regulations required and that is occurring now. I was given the assurance that the U.S. administration is firm in removing those impediments to trade. My understanding is that the formal notice will be coming forth very shortly, after which time the formalized regulations will be able to come into place.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, on February 10, the minister informed a Toronto audience that he warned the U.S. Ambassador that, should the United States not stop harassing meat imports into the United States, Canada would be forced to take corresponding action.