

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FISHERIES

Mr. Rodriguez: My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is why is it then that only the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Transport, along with his colleagues from Quebec, have tried to broaden the understanding of the accord? When will the rest of the cabinet fan out across the country dialoguing with Canadians to inform them that the accord is a good deal for Canadians?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the hon. member has tarnished what was a very excellent introductory remark, which I associate myself with, with the unfortunate interpretation which I think is totally inaccurate and totally wrong.

In fact, all ministers of the Crown have been speaking out in support of Meech Lake. If the hon. member has not heard any of the excellent speeches, I would invite him to read the speech made by the Associate Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development who made a very excellent speech on the issue of Meech Lake and about Canada. If you want to read a very thought-provoking speech about her image of Canada, I would invite the hon. member to take a look at it and that will give him some idea of how we feel about Meech Lake.

• (1500)

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same Minister and I want to tell him that one swallow does not a summer make. I would ask the Deputy Minister to tell us when the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will make an impassioned plea for the accord in Manitoba, to the Minister of National Defence in Saskatchewan, to the Deputy Prime Minister in Alberta, and to the Ministers of Fisheries and Forestry in British Columbia?

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member mentioned the hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, because both he and other cabinet colleagues from Manitoba and all caucus members from Manitoba, at least from this party, made very strong representations at the Meech Lake hearings that were conducted in the province of Manitoba. The only people who were conspicuous by their absence were the members of the New Democratic Party. Where were they?

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Atlantic Canadians live in daily fear that declining fish quotas will mean the closure of fish plants and the loss of thousands of jobs for fishermen and fish plant workers. This fear is compounded by the Government's acceptance of the free trade panel ruling allowing American processors access to west coast salmon and herring.

Before accepting this panel ruling, has the Minister obtained a legal analysis from his officials assuring that this ruling cannot be used as a precedent by U.S. processors to obtain similar access to our east coast fish stocks? If so, will he undertake to make this information available to the House?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that the panel was struck to inquire into landing regulations which this Government introduced in order to better manage and conserve our west coast salmon and herring stock. As I indicated in this House yesterday, the panel findings upheld Canada's sole jurisdiction in determining management requirements to conserve our west coast salmon and herring stocks. I will expect in time, if that question ever arose, a similar interpretation would be placed on its application with regard to all of Canada's fisheries.

Mr. LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Fisheries seriously expect Atlantic Canadians to believe that American processors in need of scarce raw product will not use this ruling to obtain access to our east coast fish stock under the FTA? Now that his Government has capitulated to the U.S. and accepted this ruling on the west coast, does he actually believe that he will be able to resist pressures on the east coast?

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, the answer, of course, is yes. We believe that the measures we are taking with regard to our trading relations with other countries, particularly the United States in this case, will guarantee the future security of the Atlantic fishing industry, in fact all of