

INSPECTION OF FISH PRODUCTS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said in the Chamber today that he was setting up his own appeal procedure and that he would do it again. There has been a misuse of discretionary power which has resulted in a serious problem. Would the Prime Minister clarify exactly what is going on now in inspection services rather than what will happen in the future? What is going on now?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is the fisheries critic for his Party and he knows full well that there is very grave concern within the industry about appeals with regard to inspection matters. My colleague has indicated that because of overlap this problem will be addressed, and I will be making representations at Cabinet to ensure that a proper appeal procedure is in fact established.

● (1430)

[Translation]

TAINTED TUNA—PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel-Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Yesterday, the Minister said he was satisfied with the decision made by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to authorize the sale of tainted tuna. Mr. Speaker, it is incredible that yesterday the Minister should have been satisfied with the situation and that today, his colleague at Fisheries and Oceans should be withdrawing the tainted fish from supermarket shelves. How can the Minister claim to protect the consumer and what does he intend to do in future to prevent such a catastrophe?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think that yesterday I repeated several times what I would do, and I urged consumers to be careful. Today, I am very pleased with the request made by my colleague at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and also with the Government's announcement that it will make the same agency responsible for both food and drug inspection.

REQUEST THAT CODE NUMBERS ON CANS OF TUNA BE PUBLISHED

Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel-Ahuntsic): Mr. Speaker, even if the cans of tainted tuna are withdrawn from store shelves, I want to ask the Minister whether he at least intends to publish the code numbers on the cans.

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): My answer is simply that it has always been our concern to protect the consumer. We have carefully followed all developments in this debate, and we are satisfied with the

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procedures and with the decisions that were made in the best interests of Canadian consumers.

[English]

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Yesterday the Prime Minister said: "This Government always resolves any doubt in favour of Canadians". The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on television last Tuesday said that he had to make a decision on this tuna problem and he gave the benefit of the doubt to the company.

Can the Prime Minister tell this House—and he was supportive of the decision of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans yesterday in the House—whose interest the Government is really protecting, the health and safety of Canadians, or of the companies?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday that, should there be any doubt, that doubt would always be resolved in favour of the Canadian consumer. That is precisely what transpired at the request of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans today.

PROTECTION INQUIRY

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed again to the Prime Minister. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said yesterday in this House that as a result of this whole episode he had invited industry to help revise the ground rules for inspections "I did not revise them—"

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Rodriguez: "—industry revised them".

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Preambles are not allowed to supplementary questions. A supplementary question, please.

Mr. Rodriguez: My question to the Prime Minister is this: whose interests, really, is the Government trying to protect, those of the company? Are you protecting ordinary Canadians, or is this an ordinary way to run a country?

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker—

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I am sorry, I did not see my colleague rise, but his answer would be the same as mine.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: The only interest involved is the interest of the taxpayer and of ordinary Canadians.