

this House. I hope I am wrong, but my interpretation of it is that the ministry of the environment could become a catch-all. When the government wanted to do something, it would be able to transfer funds from any other department to that ministry. We wasted one whole Easter recess discussing that very question. At this point all I can say is that I hope I am wrong in my interpretation.

The Chairman: The hon. member for South Western Nova.

Mr. Comeau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Boulanger: In French!

Mr. Comeau: I find it interesting, Mr. Chairman, that the "whippet" of the Liberal party seats himself very close to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). He may be trying to get one of the new positions created by the bill under study.

[*English*]

As far as I can see, this is the most devious piece of legislation the government has ever presented. Its main aim is to increase the number of ministers. Mr. Chairman, I see that the former parliamentary secretary to the minister of fisheries is talking to the President of the Treasury Board. Maybe he, too, would like one of these new positions. It is interesting to see two ministers in the chamber and to see so many hon. members whom we have not seen for quite a while. I do not know what they are looking for, but it is interesting to see them.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Comeau: It is interesting to hear them comment from their seats. Those members on the Liberal backbenches come in here just to vote. If they really want to make an impression and become ministers of state, they should speak up once in a while. We would then know if they are qualified for such positions. But I know the hon. member for St. Boniface will not be among that number; he does not speak often enough.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Chairman, I would advise the hon. member that if and when I get up, I will make a lot of sense and not indulge just in nonsensical talk.

Mr. McGrath: Explain.

Mr. Comeau: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member should explain because that remark did not make any sense. What we need is not an increase in the number of ministers but an increase in the number of responsible ministers. We do not need this provision to create new salaries, not knowing what the new departments will be. Once these ministries of state are established, we will have no way of discussing particular legislation dealing with the establishment of particular departments. We need ministers who will be responsible to Parliament. I call it ten o'clock, Mr. Chairman.

Progress reported.

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES—SUGGESTED BANNING OF FUTURE SEAL HUNTS

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) the other day if he would consider banning all future slaughter of seals, he sat silent and shrugged. I couldn't believe that he had no answer. I was right. He preferred to give it yesterday in Vancouver. But it is still far from clear what the answer means. The only clear thing seems to be that the minister has as yet no clear policy on this matter. He announced the appointment of a six-man task force to study all aspects of the annual seal hunt in the northwest Atlantic and Arctic oceans. He says the kill-quota of seals will be drastically reduced next year, suggesting that it might be 125,000 compared with this year's 245,000. But in the next breath he says that no figure can be set until the task force makes its recommendations. Then he adds that to help reduce the figure it might be necessary to launch a campaign to "have the ladies stop buying" seal coats, but he gives no indication of any government intention to launch such a campaign.

• (10:00 p.m.)

Obviously the minister needs help. Obviously he is being pushed and pulled in all directions by the conservationists who do not want to see yet another wildlife species wiped out by the politicians of the Atlantic region who are concerned about low-income seal hunters, by animal lovers all across Canada, by profit-making interests who want sealskins for luxury coats and, above all, by world opinion which is mounting fast and which is giving Canada a black eye as a nation of people engaged in the brutal extermination of an inoffensive animal species. The minister is well aware of this unenviable international reputation. He said recently:

There has been a tremendous outburst of concern. The Brussels embassy has received protesting delegations, one of which delivered a petition containing 400,000 signatures of school children... In France a protest delegation marched into the chancery... There was picketing in New York... Our embassy in Washington has been getting letters at the rate of 600 a day... I think it would take quite a few million dollars to offset the adverse publicity.

The minister could well have added that for years the members of this House have been flooded with letters, postcards, petitions, etc., from people who want to put an end to the senseless and needless cruelty of the seal hunt. Further pressure has been added by the introduction the other day into the United States Congress of a bill to ban the killing of sea mammals and to ban the importation of sealskins into the United States. The sponsor of the bill is Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma, a Democrat and a nominee for the vice-presidency.

He indicated that in his opinion the Canadian sealing industry is a dying one because seals are being killed off