

Oral Questions

be concerned about the fact that one of the Provinces which has the highest number of border crossing points, namely Ontario, has yet to participate in the duty-free shops national program. The Hon. Member and his colleagues must remember that, under the existing legislation, provincial authorities are responsible for importing, stocking and marketing alcoholic beverages in Canada. It is unfortunate that the Province of Ontario has chosen to protect its state monopoly and thus thwart private enterprise which the Canadian Government wants to promote through its duty-free shops national program. I did meet with the Ontario Minister responsible for implementing this program, but I have not yet received a favourable answer from him. We will go ahead with a unilateral program to issue operating permits for such shops, but unfortunately the permit holders would not be authorized to sell alcoholic beverages. I therefore urge Hon. Members to make representations to the Ontario Government so that it might forget all about protecting its state monopoly and work hand in hand with the Canadian Government to help private enterprise launch the duty-free shops program.

[English]

SUGGESTED ROLE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Madam Speaker, in view of the criticism of the Ontario regulations, is the Government of Canada now prepared to relax some of its regulations and invite members of the private sector to apply for an opportunity to operate a duty-free store in other Provinces of Canada in which the climate may be more favourable?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member ought to know that New Brunswick already has such a store. Indeed, I attended the opening ceremonies of that shop with a Member who is well known in the House since he often occupies the Chair. As soon as we have made an evaluation of the experimental program, we will be ready to proceed with the expansion of the national program.

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[English]

FISHERIES

FUTURE OF GEORGETOWN PLANT IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Fisheries. The federal Government has announced a new development plan for the Nova Scotia fisheries which includes access to redfish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Can the Minister assure us that the trawler fleet capacity that is now lying dormant in the Gulf area, and especially the Georgetown plant in Prince Edward Island, will be reactivated in order to process Gulf stocks and provide much needed employment opportunities in that particular area?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I would first like to remind the Hon. Member that no fishing allocations could be made on a bilateral basis between the Department and one single Province. All negotiations must involve all Provinces. That is why there has been no commitment made, although we have said that Nova Scotia, like all other Provinces, will be consulted on any allocation.

Second, I would be grateful to the Hon. Member if he would tell me whether or not he is in favour of allowing non-Gulf based vessels greater access. They actually already have access to redfish in the Gulf. Third, on the question of development land for the fisheries of Nova Scotia, yes, I have committed myself on that question, but as you can tell by the joint statement that Mr. Buchanan and myself have made public, it is well understood that the amount and the sharing ratio will have to be decided upon by Cabinet.

Mr. Crouse: Madam Speaker, the Minister must be aware that the Georgetown plant was closed by the action of his predecessor in office who denied Nickerson's the right to supply that plant with ships operating outside the Gulf. This is a matter that he will have to address since he has restructured Nickerson and National Sea.

POSITION OF INDEPENDENT COMPANIES

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also directed to the Minister of Fisheries. In the restructuring agreements the Minister has committed himself to returning the fishery to the private sector as soon as it is economically viable. I hope I am paraphrasing him correctly. Since this will require existing independent companies to grow and strengthen their position in the industry, how can this be accomplished when they are faced with strong competition from this new Government backed enterprise?

• (1500)

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend has asked several questions. On the question of Georgetown, the history, with which I am familiar, that was confirmed to me by the Minister of Fisheries of P.E.I. is that Nickerson committee to supply Georgetown with their trawlers. Then they moved their trawlers to Riverport and, when Riverport burned, they moved their trawlers to Canso. It is the company that failed in its commitments. It moved its trawlers from P.E.I. Now that we have managed to have this agreement with Nova Scotia, I can tell my hon. friend that already, through the representation of my colleague, the regional minister for P.E.I., we are looking very closely at the possibility of supplying fish through that newly structured company, to Georgetown. Whoever gets Canso I think will also have to look at the possibility of supplying fish to Georgetown. I am very surprised that, even though that new company is not yet structured, my hon. friend is criticizing its actions.