

resource, did the minister have any evidence to support these higher quotas, other than what the Minister for International Trade described as his "firm belief". Anything more than a hunch?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Indeed I did, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member knows that the methodology for determining the recommended allowable catch has a great range of uncertainty and the lowest level recommended by scientists has to do with the maximum rebuilding rate of the resource.

Dr. Les Harris, who has not yet given me his final report, suggested a quota for 1990 be nominally set at approximately 190,000 metric tons, and that represents a 26 per cent quota reduction from the quota I set only a year ago. As we can see in terms of the unfortunate events unfolding in Atlantic Canada, we have to be gradual, but we have to move toward the desirable conservation objective in these matters.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, the minister discredits the evidence from our own scientists. Is he the least bit embarrassed about criticizing Portuguese and Spanish fishermen for overfishing quotas established by NAFO reps who are advised by our Canadian scientists, whose recommendations this government is so blindly ignoring?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the two situations are quite different. In the case of the overfishing by Spain and Portugal on the nose of the Grand Banks, they are fishing at a level 32,000 tonnes higher than the quota in that region, which was set by NAFO at zero.

When significant changes are required in Canadian quotas, with the full support of industry in the Atlantic provinces, we often cushion those changes over a period of one or two or three years. The hon. member is suggesting that we should have thrown thousands more workers out of work by closing the half dozen or dozen additional plants. This government is not prepared to take such a heartless decision.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation.

In October 1989, northerners obtained from Canada Post a three-month moratorium on postal rate increases of 32 or 40 per cent or more for commercial shipments to the North. These increases were originally to take effect on November 13, 1989; the moratorium ends on January 31, 1990.

Last Friday, Canada Post Corporation announced, before the end of the moratorium, that a reduction of only 5 per cent would be allowed for foodstuffs and drugs sent to the North.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Can the minister confirm to me today that in so doing, Canada Post Corporation is not respecting its moratorium and that northerners will have no more fresh bread in the coming months?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as a result of representations from interested parties, including the hon. member last November, the post office indicated a 5 per cent decrease in the planned schedule for the northern air stage rates and promised a freeze until February 1.

My information is that that remains in place. In the meantime, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is undertaking to study the issue. It will be considering suggestions from all interested parties and by February 1 the following year, we will have appropriate policies in place. In the meantime there is a freeze in place.

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EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Last week the Chairman of the Canadian Human Rights Commission was critical of the