

Representing a large rural eastern Ontario riding in which Napanee, Ontario, and a large portion of the Bay of Quinte are located, this area is considered the walleye capital of Canada with over 10,000 registrants for fishing tournaments the first weekend in May.

Canadians are concerned about the conservation and the impact which native rights are having, and could have, on future hunting and fishing, particularly in areas known as sanctuaries. Can the minister explain what action the federal government is taking on the interim enforcement policy to hunt and fish for food in order to clarify existing treaties and laws concerning native peoples and the application of laws of other jurisdictions which pertain to natural resources, specifically hunting and fishing?

• (1450)

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked a question which is of extreme concern to many thousands of residents of the province of Ontario. I should clarify that in Ontario the provincial NDP government has jurisdiction over hunting and fishing and conservation regulations.

About a year ago, after the Sparrow decision of the Supreme Court which instructs Canada and provinces to deal generously with the aboriginal food, fishing and hunting rights of First Nations' people, the Ontario government brought in interim guidelines without prior discussion, consultation or negotiation with affected parties. Now it is negotiating agreements at the regional level. We are observing these negotiations and encouraging a co-operative means of resolving these questions.

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FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of fisheries.

If, as the minister says, the Prime Minister is looking to the United States in the overfishing fight for support, we are on even shakier ground than I thought. Last year the Prime Minister went to Europe and talked to political leaders about foreign overfishing. Now he is about to do the same thing again.

Can the minister tell us if there is any reason to believe that this week's meetings are going to be any more productive than last year's, which were a complete flop? Will he tell us whether the Prime Minister intends

to send a signal to those people to focus their minds on something like the possibility of some trade sanctions?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is on a visit to France, I believe, for the next several days. He will meet with the President of France, Mr. Mitterrand. This subject was on the list of the items to be discussed, overfishing by the European Community off the east coast of Canada.

Later in the month he will be meeting with Mr. Delors, President of the European Community; and the Prime Minister of Portugal. These will be important subjects that will be pursued then as well. The Prime Minister is making every effort to have the European Community observe the principles of sustainable development and conservation and cease their overfishing off the east coast of Canada.

I do not believe that our diplomatic campaign should cease simply because some people do not have a great deal of faith that reason and diplomacy can be successful. I notice that Premier Wells, although he takes a more belligerent attitude, went to the UNCED conference in New York last week and engaged in some diplomatic proceedings and negotiations. Surely that is the way a civilized nation proceeds in connection with such issues.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, a good dose of reality helps your faith somewhat.

Spanish and Portuguese vessels are using fine mesh nets on the Grand Banks to catch young flounder. It is scandalous what they are doing. They are catching flounder that are only a couple of years old and only weigh a few ounces.

I want to ask the minister, who mutters aloud from time to time about taking unilateral action to put an end to this piracy, to tell us what that action is that he keeps muttering about from time to time, and under what circumstances would he take it? Why does he not take off the external affairs muzzle and say what is on his mind.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that any of us in this Chamber, in fact anyone in the country, needs to spend much time or effort trying to convince Canadians, especially Newfoundlanders, that these predatory practices of overfishing should cease. Where we have to