

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

Maybe the Minister should eat a carload of tuna!

My question is as follows: Since the spoiled fish is a consumer product, could the Minister inform the House whether he was told about the problem last April?

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer this question by saying that the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is responsible for regulating the inspection of fish at the retail level only, and that such regulation or inspection is concerned with preventing fraud and with product packaging.

We are in no way involved in the health and safety aspect of food products. That responsibility lies with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

That is our position in the debate on this issue with our colleague at Fisheries and Oceans.

● (1440)

HEALTH THREAT CAUSED BY CERTAIN PRODUCTS—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mrs. Thérèse Killens (Saint-Michel-Ahuntsic):** Mr. Speaker, could the Minister give Canadians the assurance that he and his colleagues will do whatever is necessary to remove this harmful product from store shelves and do so immediately, today?

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** I can assure the House that the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has an abiding interest in protecting the consumer, and in this respect, we were given the assurance by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans that the product was safe, and we are satisfied with that statement.

## REPUTATION OF CANADIAN FISHING INDUSTRY

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister.

The disastrous decision made by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has had the effect of damaging and compromising Canada's excellent reputation in the fish products industry and threatening the jobs of workers in the fish processing plants of New Brunswick. Now does the Prime Minister intend to go about repairing the harm done to the reputation of Canada's industry and restoring the confidence of Canadian consumers?

[English]

**Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, the answer is, of course, that in New Brunswick, where the people know all about this situation, there is a general sense that the matter was properly and fairly dealt with. There is no concern in the fishing industry in New Brunswick whatsoever.

My hon. friend talks about jobs. There is no safety issue here. I can assure my hon. friend that, as a consequence of the better guidelines that are now in place, those jobs are probably more secure than they were before.

## ENFORCEMENT OF INSPECTION PROCEDURES

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. In order to restore Canada's good reputation in the fishing products industry, is the Prime Minister prepared to send the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to New Brunswick immediately to assure the workers in that particular plant that the high levels of inspection and the procedures to ensure that quality products are put on the market will be enforced?

[Translation]

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think I can give my hon. friend the assurance that the Minister has done so on many occasions. In the area we are concerned with, the issue we are dealing with is a matter of health and safety. I think it has been dealt with today in the House to the satisfaction of all Members—

**Mr. Rodriguez:** It is a matter of confidence.

**Mr. Mulroney:** —and in doing so, I think that in this important matter, the Minister is sending a message of confidence to the industry's workers and to consumers.

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[English]

## BANKS AND BANKING

CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANK COLLAPSE—DIVIDEND ON  
PREFERRED SHARES

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance. On March 5, knowing that it was in financial difficulty, the Canadian Commercial Bank nevertheless declared a dividend on its preferred shares. Now that the Minister has had six months to examine the affairs of this bank, can she explain that decision to the House?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, the problems of the Canadian Commercial Bank were brought to my attention on March 14, 1985, and not on March 5. In the spring, we had indicated in committee how the problems had arisen and that management at that point had some confidence in the company and its earnings.

## TRADING IN SHARES

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Finance. On the strength of the March 5 dividend, the price of CCB preferred shares rose and some 8,500 shares were traded