

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the government has laid down very clearly its position on that matter on many occasions. I have made many statements about it in the House during the past years. Perhaps the only statement I would have to make today in the name of members of all parties—who will join me, I am sure—is to extend our heartfelt wishes to all Canadian mothers on the occasion of Mother's Day which we are about to celebrate all across Canada.

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[English]

### FISHERIES

#### LOBSTER FISHERMEN—DAMAGE TO GEAR BY STORM— GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. In view of the fact there was a severe storm in the western part of Newfoundland causing serious damage to boats and lobster gear, will the minister indicate if he has been made aware of the situation? If so, what action is he taking, bearing in mind the urgency of the matter due to the limited season and the depressed state of the economy in that area?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I was made aware by the hon. member and told by my staff that there were problems. My regional officers will be reporting on the extent of the damage after it has been assessed. As the hon. member knows, the disaster formula has to be triggered by the provincial authorities when they make a decision to use or not use the federal-provincial disaster formula. However, I recognize that this determination can take some time. I have asked my officials to do what they can to expedite a temporary solution or temporary assistance and to check where other gear might be available in the region where that type of fishing is not yet on in other parts of the Atlantic provinces and to move it there as quickly as possible.

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### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

#### POSSIBLE SURVEILLANCE OF SOVIET UNION CORRESPONDENTS IN PARLIAMENTARY PRESS GALLERY

**Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. It arises out of answers he gave to the House yesterday in reply to my questions relating to recruitment by the RCMP of reporters to spy and snoop on their fellow reporters. The implication of the answer given by the Solicitor General yesterday was that Soviet correspondents in the Parliamentary Press Gallery were under surveillance. Is the minister now in a position to specify whether any or all of them are under surveillance? If so, has he given instructions to have their visas terminated or is this

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simply a fishing expedition the RCMP are entering into with regard to parliamentary reporting?

**Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I might point out to the hon. member that he has used the word "Soviet". In my answer in the House yesterday, I referred to the foreign press corps. Whenever there is evidence of illegal activity in this country by people who are here for other purposes, as the facts brought out over the past 12 months have indicated, the hon. member knows that appropriate action will be taken by this government.

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● (1150)

### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

#### POLICY OF CORPORATION ON CORRESPONDENTS ACTING AS INFORMERS FOR ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar):** I should like to direct my supplementary to the Secretary of State responsible for the CBC. Press stories in the *Ottawa Citizen* have indicated that the RCMP were approaching a prospective correspondent for the CBC in Moscow, one Denis Baxter. Since this will place a heavy onus on Mr. Baxter if and when he goes to Moscow, would the minister let the House know whether it is the practice of the CBC to have their correspondents act as information gatherers for the RCMP? Can he put the record straight so that Mr. Baxter will not be under any undue pressure when he is in Moscow.

**Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, I know nothing of this question. I do think, however, that while the question may be within the bounds of parliamentary propriety, it is extraordinarily irresponsible for a member to make insinuations of that kind unless he has substantive evidence to bring forward, and, if he does, he should provide it to the proper authorities. I think the hon. member owes an apology to Mr. Baxter.

**An hon. Member:** You did not see the news!

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** The Solicitor General indicated, when made aware of the approach, that this was not an unusual situation. The hon. gentleman's own colleague has confirmed the fact that this particular approach was made. The Secretary of State applies himself to matters related to the CBC, and I ask him to take it upon himself to find out what is happening within the CBC to protect the employees of that corporation.

**Mr. Roberts:** I think the hon. member has misrepresented my colleague's statement and that he owes an apology to Mr. Baxter.

**Mr. Fox:** Perhaps I can clarify the matter, Mr. Speaker. At no point did I confirm that the RCMP approached Mr. Baxter. As a matter of fact, I am informed that the RCMP did not approach Mr. Baxter. But it is possible, if Mr. Baxter so desires, that he be given a briefing on protective security