

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Ralph E. Goodale (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, if questions Nos. 612 and 1,395 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

[Text]

REGIONAL OFFICES MAINTAINED BY DEPARTMENT OF SOLICITOR GENERAL

Question No. 612—**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):**

1. (a) How many regional offices are maintained by the Department of the Solicitor General (b) where is each located (c) for what area is each responsible?
2. On what date was each established and with how many personnel?
3. What is the present personnel strength of each office?
4. In addition to regional offices, are district or other sub-offices maintained and, if so (a) in what locations (b) how many?
5. Are the duties performed by those manning the regional and/or district offices line functions, in the chain of command from Ottawa to the operator in the field, or do they have other functions to perform and, if so, what are such functions?

Return tabled.

DEPARTMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE—PROGRAMMES WHICH PROVIDE GRANTS TO CITIZENS

Question No. 1,395—**Mr. Symes:**

1. What are the names of all the programmes under the Department of the Secretary of State which provide grants to citizens?
2. For the years 1975-76, how many applications were (a) received (b) approved for grants under the Human Rights and Group Understand Programme?
3. For the same years, by constituency, what is a list of the applications (a) received (b) approved and the name of the applicant, in each case?
4. For the same years, what was the (a) total amount (b) total amount by constituency of the approved applications under the Programme?
5. For the same years, by constituency, which applications were (a) referred for approval to (b) rejected by the local Member of Parliament?

Return tabled.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

FISHERIES ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND CRIMINAL CODE IN CONSEQUENCE THEREOF

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment) moved that Bill C-38, to amend the Fisheries Act

Fisheries

and to amend the Criminal Code in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.

[English]

He said: Mr. Speaker, as we start discussion on amendments to the Fisheries Act, Bill C-38, it is necessary to remember that the Fisheries Act is already powerful in the principles it sets forth. It protects the fish and man's use of fish. It states that no one may harm the waters of fish. This principle makes it our main legal arm in controlling water pollution within Canada. It also has great importance in controlling ocean pollution in ways I shall discuss. Although the principles of the existing act are good, it lacks the flexibility and the force to apply these principles fully. Social growth and change bring forth new threats, dangers hardly dreamed of by the drafters of the original act in 1868. They lived in days when the Atlantic salmon crowded the banks of eastern rivers. Since then, this famous fish has provided one of the best, or worst, examples of what a species can suffer from society.

In those major rivers of New Brunswick that still harbour Atlantic salmon, the fish that reach the spawning grounds yearly now number only in the low thousands. To reach the spawning grounds they must pass poachers who have used everything from pitchforks to dynamite. These vandals have assaulted my fisheries officers, have fired shots at them and have threatened to burn down their homes. When we catch a person poaching, the law does not provide sufficient punishment to deter him and others like him. What fines we can levy often amount to a minor tax; their criminal gains are far higher.

There were also other causes for the widespread loss of the great Atlantic salmon fishery, mainly growth—urban and industrial growth—with accompanying pollution, loss of fish habitats and other damage that the Fisheries Act and its application failed to prevent. The same effects of industrial growth phenomenon threaten other species in Canada, not the cute-looking seal, a thriving and increasing species in its deep waters, but homelier and truly endangered species in our rivers, such as the shortnose sturgeon which attracts no glamorous defenders.

A Fisheries Act strong enough for its purpose of protecting fish and man's use of fish has obvious side benefits. Although Canada has the longest coastline, and probably the most fresh water of any country, size has no necessary relation to health. Our water resists pollution no more than the water in Minima-ta. If our laws can protect the water, if we give the fish a place to live, we can have a better place for man to live. People should be able to see clean water, swim in it, maybe catch a fish. The changes we are suggesting will increase the government's power to protect the fish and their waters.

These changes reflect a stronger public attitude that anyone whose actions affect these resources must take full responsibility. In particular, those who wilfully despoil should face strong penalties. Perhaps the most vicious offenders are the poachers who make a career of robbing honest fishermen. The poacher is the opposite of Robin Hood: he robs what belongs to