

Inquiries of the Ministry
NORTHERN AFFAIRS

REQUEST FOR PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE
BREEDING GROUNDS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. S. Speakman (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, notice of which has been given.

In view of the current very active program of exploration in northern Canada and on the Arctic islands for oil and other natural resources, will the minister assure hon. members and all sportsmen in Canada that the natural breeding ground of the Canada goose—that symbol of Canada—and other wild geese, will be protected, so that such exploration activity will not destroy another of our great natural resources, good, wild fowl hunting?

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): The hon. member was kind enough to give me notice of this question, and I want to assure him that we are fully aware of the potential conflict between the development of mineral and petroleum resources in the territorial and island Arctic areas and the protection of the important wildlife resources, particularly the migratory birds of those areas.

Fortunately we have had no difficulty up to the present moment, but the whole question is under urgent study by some of the divisions of my department. These divisions are those concerned with wildlife interests, the welfare of the native population and mineral development. Full consideration is being given to the implications of resource use in the areas in question.

Mr. Speakman: A supplementary question. I wonder whether the minister could be more specific, and could he tell us of anything positive which his department is doing in those areas toward conservation of the migratory birds?

Mr. Dinsdale: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Up to the present moment we have established six migratory bird sanctuaries in the eastern Arctic regions: one of these is on Akimiski island, another in the McConnell river area, and another north of Churchill; two on Southampton island and also two on Baffin island. There are no sanctuaries established in the western Arctic at the moment. Arctic biologists, however, have surveyed the problem. They are aware of the location of the nesting grounds and we hope to have a similar number of migratory bird sanctuaries established in the western Arctic area.

The supplementary question gives me the opportunity to refer to the problem of the

surface vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy, aircraft of the R.C.A.F. and the Royal Canadian Navy, with assistance from surface vessels and aircraft of the United States navy, all of which were on exercises in the region involved.

The long-liner *Muriel Eileen* was found with decks awash on Wednesday without any sign of life. Debris from the *Jimmie and Sisters* and the *Marjorie Beryl* was picked up in the search area by the surface vessels. Positive identification of this material was made by the owners of the respective vessels and relatives of the crew members, virtually ending any hope for the safety of the vessels and crews. I am at the same time pleased to report that another vessel, the *Felix and Florence Hickey*, which was disabled in the same storm, was taken into tow by the tug *Foundation Vigilant* on Friday, March 24, with all hands safe.

In view of the very thorough search coverage that has been given and the evidence found which indicates that the missing vessels are no longer afloat, search authorities now consider that nothing would be gained by prolonging the operations further. Accordingly, it is expected that the search will be suspended at the conclusion of the operations today.

I know that all hon. members join me in expressing our sympathy to the wives and relatives of the 17 fishermen who must now be feared lost, and to the 50 children whose fathers are the victims of this disaster.

IMMIGRATION

REPORTED REMARKS BY DEPUTY MINISTER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Walter Pitman (Peterborough): I should like to address a question to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. In her absence perhaps the parliamentary secretary will answer.

My question arises out of a speech made by Dr. Davidson, deputy minister of citizenship and immigration, to the effect that reports of Canada's economic conditions, appearing in the British and European press, were malicious libels on the reputation of Canada. Can the minister or the parliamentary secretary indicate to the house more specifically what reports Dr. Davidson was referring to and exactly who was responsible for them?

Mr. John Charlton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will take the question as notice.