

Mr. Roberts: The hon. member should know that the government has taken the decision to increase very significantly the funds available for acid rain research. Much of it will be used to develop strategies for combating the impact of acid rain on fish spawning grounds in the Atlantic provinces.

I know that the House of Commons subcommittee on acid rain will be visiting Nova Scotia soon. I hope that the visit will help make people in Canada, particularly people in that region, more aware of the significance of this problem.

Generally speaking, we are pressing ahead as vigorously as we possibly can with the signature of international accord with the United States government to help regulate this problem. It will be a subject of major importance on the agenda of discussions with the President of the United States when he visits Canada in early March.

* * *

FISHERIES

REGULATION OF WEST COAST FISHERIES—IMPACT ON KATZIE INDIAN BAND

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The minister must be aware of the controversy and concern which have greeted his new proposed regulations for fisheries on the west coast, especially as they affect the Fraser River and its closure. A particular Indian band, the Katzie band, in my riding near Pitt Meadows, depend on the Fraser gill-net fishery for 90 per cent of their income. They are protesting this closure in the strongest possible terms on two basic grounds. First, it is unfair because it hits one fishery and leaves the others relatively unscathed. Two, it is ineffective as a conservation measure.

As a result of these two basic grounds I have two questions for the minister. What steps does the minister intend to take to compensate these people, both native and non-native fishermen, if he does go ahead and proceeds with the full closure for the 1981 season? Will the minister reconsider placing a moratorium on the implementation of these regulations until the department and the minister himself can resume the consultative process which has not functioned for at least six months?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, the hon. member says these measures are unfair. The fact is that all groups have found that the measures we have taken have been difficult to accept and many groups have protested, exactly as the group mentioned by the hon. member. However, the reality is that the Chinook stocks of the Fraser are very badly in need of protection. That is what we are endeavouring to do.

I have said to the hon. member before that we are trying to find alleviation and alternatives for those who will lose all opportunities, or most opportunities, of being engaged in the fishery. I have not excluded the possible measure of meeting

Presence in Gallery

with groups which are very directly affected. Certainly that group on the Fraser is being hampered and hurt, which I recognize.

As for the question of a moratorium or reconsidering, I have indicated if conservation measures can be effected in other ways, aside from the way we have proposed, that I am willing to look at them. The difficulty is that everyone wants to have his group exempted and other groups to pay the costs of conservation. That is not possible.

● (1440)

DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. AUTHORITIES

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, I agree with the minister that conservation measures need to take place, and that some other groups are also being affected, but the department has strangled the Fraser gill-net fishery.

Aside from the years of mismanagement which have taken place, the habitat destruction, the lack of enforcement in terms of illegal fishing, the pollution, or you name it, there are more Fraser-bound Chinook caught by the San Juan and Point Roberts American fisheries than will be saved by cutting off the Fraser for this year.

I should like to know what the minister intends to do to seek some kind of an agreement with the Americans so that they, instead of destroying our Chinook stock, can help save them?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, we have been in communication with the United States authorities on this very question. My hope is that they will respond positively. They have indicated that they understand the Canadian problem. I think it will be a test of their good faith in the coming negotiations on the salmon interception problem and the whole area of interception between Canadian and American fishermen if they respond to the conservation measures we have taken. I will inform the hon. member when I receive an answer.

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF SPEAKER OF NEWFOUNDLAND LEGISLATURE

Madam Speaker: I should like to draw the attention of members of the House to the presence in our gallery of a distinguished colleague, the Speaker of Newfoundland, the Honourable Leonard Simms.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF SECRETARY OF COMMERCE OF MEXICO

Madam Speaker: Also I should like to draw the attention of members of the House to the presence in our gallery of a