

market of the United States first. I hope to report to him on the negotiations before July 1. If that is not achieved, we will have to consider other options in those circumstances.

CANADIAN CONTENT—TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Madam Speaker, the Minister is talking about the American agreement. The Japanese are now producing in the United States. That agreement also covers trucks.

Could the Minister confirm that this will be part of the agreement between Canada and Japan? Will he also confirm that his officials are working on a Canadian content Bill that would implement some of the recommendations, if not most, in the automobile Task Force report as a contingency plan if the negotiations with Japan on the limiting of imports fail?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, I have not authorized officials to work on the drafting of any such legislation. It might well be that legislation of that type may fall under the jurisdiction of the very distinguished Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

I can say to the Hon. Member that the report of the auto task force will be carefully studied by Cabinet. Only after Cabinet has reached a conclusion on it would there be such action as negotiations on those points with Japan, or on the question of drafting legislation. I think it is important that we have a restraint arrangement in place for at least a further nine months while we proceed with the examination and consideration of the recommendations of the task force.

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FISHERIES

RESTRUCTURING OF MAJOR FISH COMPANIES IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. In light of the Government's proposals for restructuring Atlantic Canada's five major integrated fish companies and, I would add, the discussions that were held only last week between the heads of these companies and officials of the Minister's Department, is he now in a position to inform the House about the Government's plans in this area? How much money will be provided to bring about the amalgamation of these companies?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I can tell the Hon. Member that the amounts involved here will be substantial and that all parties will have to contribute. As well, I hope those negotiations will be concluded in the very near future.

FUTURE OF SMALL INDEPENDENT COMPANIES

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, will the present five large companies, National Sea and H.B.

Nickerson of Nova Scotia, Fisheries Products, the Lake Grop and John Penney Limited of Newfoundland be amalgamated into two companies, for example, one in Nova Scotia and one in Newfoundland? If so, what will be the future role of a large number of small and mainly specialized individually owned companies? Will they be in a position to compete with the government financially assisted companies?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, this is certainly a valid question. Like the Hon. Member, I have noticed that the smaller companies on the whole have fared better than the bigger ones. There is no reason to believe that they will be cornered by the bigger ones.

I am sure that my hon. friend understands that I cannot give any details of those negotiations and what their final outcome would be. I can tell him that I and other Members of Cabinet are overseeing that restructuring. I hope that an agreement would be reached with all interested parties in the very near future.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ELIGIBILITY OF FRESHWATER FISHERMEN—DRAFTING OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. He will know that we amended the Unemployment Insurance Act in this House two weeks ago, which will make freshwater fishermen eligible for unemployment insurance. They have been paying into the fund for a number of years. Is the Minister treating this as a priority, and when will the regulations be drafted to allow unemployed freshwater fishermen to draw on the fund?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that the House was able to support the special application of the unemployment insurance regulations to inland fishermen. We are now working on the regulations. I would expect that they would be applied to that particular group of workers for this particular fishing season, starting this Spring and Summer.

FRESHWATER FISH MARKETING CORPORATION—COSTS CHARGED TO FISHERMEN

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Freshwater fishermen must market their fish through the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in Winnipeg. The Minister will know that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation's cost of operation is in excess of 35 per cent, which is taken directly from the fishermen's pockets and reduces their income substantially. Will the Minister do