

Statement on Seal Slaughter

• (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. McIlraith: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I doubt very much that we can proceed with a supply motion in any event as the rule states that it must be commenced on a Monday. We would be very glad to proceed with the business outlined at page 2472 of *Hansard* for Wednesday, March 9.

[Translation]

FINANCE, TRADE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

THIRD REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. H. E. Gray (Essex West) presented, in French and English, the third report of the standing committee on finance, trade and economic affairs.

IMMIGRATION

RESTRICTION ON CANADIAN WORKERS ENTERING U.S.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, on February 24 last, I was asked and I agreed to table the regulations of the American government governing immigration.

I am now prepared to table them if there is no objection.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Has the minister leave to table the documents to which he has just referred?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

FISHERIES

SLAUGHTER OF SEALS—STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Hon. H. J. Robichaud (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement concerning sealing operations off Canada's east coast. I am prompted to make it now in view of the numerous letters and telegrams which have and are being received by hon. members on both sides of the house.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May we have order in the house.

Mr. Robichaud: I hope this statement will provide hon. members with information on which they can reply to representations which they are receiving on this matter. First, let me say that adequate measures are being taken for the conservation of the seal

[Mr. Starr.]

herds by my department. These measures are based on conclusive scientific evidence resulting from about 20 years' work by the Fisheries Research Board and there is no possibility that the Atlantic seal herds will be exterminated.

Indeed, our regulations in the gulf of St. Lawrence, where the fishery in 1965 and 1966 was exclusively Canadian, are designed to increase the herds. Following Canada's initiative, taken at the 1964 meeting of the International Commission on the North Atlantic Fisheries, we expect international conservation measures in other areas very shortly.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There are too many conversations going on in the house at the moment.

Mr. Robichaud: Sealing last year put an additional \$1,640,254 into the pockets of fishermen in three Atlantic coast provinces and is, therefore, an important source of income to those who have access to this fishery. While we do not have the value of seals to Prince Edward Island fishermen, we do know that last year sealing to Newfoundland fishermen was worth \$901,663; to Nova Scotia fishermen \$549,986, and to Quebec fishermen \$188,605. In addition, of course, plant workers who process the skins on shore also benefit from this operation.

Following consultation with the industry and with humane society representatives, regulations governing sealing off the Atlantic coast were revised and made much more restrictive for the 1965 season. Open and closed seasons for operations from ships and aircraft were retained as before, and a number of new control measures were introduced.

For conservation purposes in 1965 a quota was applied for the first time to a large area of the gulf of St. Lawrence limiting the kill by sealers operating from ships and aircraft to 50,000 harp seals of less than a year in age. The killing of adult seals in breeding patches was prohibited. There was a new prohibition against the killing of hood seals in this part of the gulf. Steps were taken to limit the use of aircraft in the actual taking of seals to that area of the gulf of St. Lawrence where they had already established an operation by 1964. To avoid waste, new regulations limiting the time that seal skins could be left on the ice before removal to a base of operations were also brought into effect.