

*Oral Questions*

## EXECUTION OF SEARCH WARRANT

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, I want to put the question again. Stop stonewalling and give us a clear answer. Was a search warrant executed on a Member of Parliament? Yes or no?

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I am not denying that a search warrant was involved.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Just hold it. The allegation was with respect to Mirabel and I said it had nothing to do with Mirabel. The information I have received is that it has nothing whatsoever to do with Mirabel. Is that clear enough for the Hon. Member?

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## FISHERIES

## EXPORT OF CLAMS TO UNITED STATES

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Yesterday in the House I raised the question of clams being exported from contaminated water in the Prime Minister's riding to the United States. This morning I have copies of four letters that were exchanged between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada that confirm that Environment Canada had recommended the closing of these two sites. They also confirm, shockingly, that Fisheries and Oceans ignored this recommendation and overruled the Department of the Environment.

I also have two applications, one by *Les Produits de la Gaspésie* and the other by *La Conserverie Polyvalente Rivière Portneuf*. One was filled out in January, 1987, and the other in February, 1987. Both of them were approved on February 18, 1987, for the export of clams to the United States.

Will the Minister tell us why the advice of the experts of the Department of the Environment was ignored by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans? Will he tell us why the recommendation was overruled, why these applications were approved, and will he assure us that there was no pressure from companies that wanted to fish in the Prime Minister's riding and export those clams to the United States?

• (1220)

**Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, I know that you will accord me the same courtesy in giving the detailed answer that this very malicious question demands.

Yesterday the Hon. Member alleged that shellfish taken from rivers in Quebec have been officially classified as

contaminated by Ottawa and exported from Canada. That is patently untrue, and I will explain why.

Second, the Hon. Member has stated that these export permits violated a Canada-U.S. agreement of 1948. That is patently untrue.

At certain times during the winter months in parts of Atlantic Canada, certain beds of clams are certified as safe, under both our health protection regulations and our fisheries regulations. That is because during the winter months there are not the similar types of hydrological situations that occur in the summer.

What happens is as follows. All 55 monitoring stations in Quebec are sampled weekly for paralytic shellfish poisoning or evidence of toxin. On this basis, the two areas in question, Papinachois and Rivière Blanche, were closed until mid-October. As in previous years, those areas were reopened around mid-October, after appropriate tests for toxin proved to be negative.

Third, once harvesting is reopened every lot at the processing plant—the only processing plant on the north shore this year being at Rivière Portneuf—is tested for bacterial contamination. I should point out that that plant and most of these shellfish areas are located in the federal electoral district of Charlevoix. Only product meeting established Canada-U.S. health standards is permitted for commercial sale and export.

Finally, there have been no exports to the United States of America of clams, quahogs, mussels, and oysters since the alert of December 11 from any plants under federal jurisdiction.

I think that the premise of the question is most irresponsible.

**Mr. Crosbie:** It is a disgrace.

## ENVIRONMENT CANADA OFFICIAL'S LETTER

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I know that there have been no exports since that time. I am not talking about that. The Minister stated that clams could be exported at certain times. These applications are not for certain times. They are open-ended applications approved for the entire year.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. I have here a letter dated October 21, 1987, from an Environment Canada employee, and I quote:

The report recommended the closing of these two sectors, and, to our knowledge, your Department has made no move to reclassify these sectors. Furthermore, products from the contaminated sectors have been harvested and put on the export market. We reiterate our recommendation for closing the two sectors.

Congratulations!