

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

PANEL RULING AFFECTING BRITISH COLUMBIA FISHERY

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I hope the Tories do not run off with the shoe closet after the election.

An Hon. Member: You can do better than that.

Mr. Fulton: My question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. On November 30 he received a letter from the British Columbia Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Savage, regarding the GATT panel ruling, which pointed out that the decision has serious implications for export controls and natural resource management. Mr. Savage said:

British Columbia also notes that any specific grandfathering of Provincial fishery practices impairs all those practices not specified. By grandfathering East Coast policies, the legal text could be interpreted as specifically disallowing existing West Coast policies which have a similar intent.

He concludes by saying:

Without such a solution the British Columbia government may find itself under considerable pressure to reassess its support for the Canada-U.S. agreement.

Will the Minister confirm that the Government of Canada will oppose the GATT ruling as the Minister stated on November 18 in this House?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I do not have the letter from the Hon. Mr. Savage in front of me. Indeed, as we have indicated in the House and as I have indicated to the British Columbia fishing industry, in the matter of regulations which we apply against the export of unprocessed salmon and herring, we intend to meet our obligations to our fishermen on the West Coast, to the processors, and to meet our obligations under the GATT. We intend to take all those factors into consideration in preparing for our case to be heard before the GATT council.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said that he could not recall the context in which he made a particular statement. He was asked what action he would take in relation to the GATT panel ruling, and the statement he made, as reported in *Hansard* at page 10922, is:

—we will be opposing that recommendation when it reaches the GATT council.

Is that or is that not the position of the Government of Canada, or was that not the Minister of Fisheries who was in this House on November 18?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to members of the industry, including some of the Hon. Member's own constituents, we will be consulting with the processors, the unions and others, and preparing the Government's response to this GATT panel recommendation. I might add, it does not become a decision of GATT until the GATT council finally ratifies it.

Oral Questions

Mr. McCurdy: Do you oppose it or not?

Mr. Siddon: I, together with the fishing industry which I represent, certainly will be doing everything in my power to ensure that their interests are represented.

Mr. Rodriguez: What do you think?

Mr. Siddon: If the Hon. Member wants to interpret that as opposing, at this point I am certainly opposing anything that is not in the interests of our fishermen.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ZIMBABWE—DETENTION, WITHOUT CHARGE, OF CANADIAN CITIZEN

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of State for External Relations. Has Canadian citizen Dick Laban been held in a Zimbabwe jail for several months without even a formal charge being laid? What is the Department doing to ensure that Mr. Laban is dealt with in accordance with fundamental justice in a country that does not have a very enviable human rights record?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of Mr. Laban's case. As the Hon. Member said, he is being held in Zimbabwe. He is being visited regularly by an officer from our High Commission. He is also visited by his family and friends who bring him books and food. He is in good health, is well treated, and has retained a lawyer. He is accused of having provided information to South Africa's intelligence service in 1984. A hearing was scheduled for December 8, and we are now waiting for news from our High Commission.

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[English]

HEALTH

TOXIC MUSSELS—PLAN OF ACTION—REPRESENTATIONS REPORTEDLY MADE TO ONTARIO GOVERNMENT

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Throughout the situation dealing with the toxic mussels, the Minister today has insisted that last Friday he had "a very clear plan of action" to deal with the over-all ban.

If he had this very clear plan of action, can he explain why, after he had announced a ban on all shellfish from Atlantic Canada, his own officials were in touch with the Government of Ontario in an attempt to convince it to lift a ban on mussels