

Oral Questions

coming days. Federal participation takes three forms. The first is the contribution to the site preparation, the offsite services, and the access road. Then there is a guarantee of \$3 per tonne throughput charge at the port. Third, there will be considerable participation by CN in the improvement of the main rail line. The very specific details will come out, as I said in the coming days. It is difficult to give the degree of subsidization at this point because of the change in the volume of the sale, but some of it will be on a non-compensatory basis, for example, the access road will be paid by DREE, but most of it will be on a cost recovery basis.

Mr. Oberle: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. It is said that up to \$1 billion will be required by the two governments, that of British Columbia and of Canada, to put the necessary infrastructure in place, townsites, rails, roads, port facilities and so on. That is a significant expenditure of money. Is it the minister's intention to table in the House the extent of the federal involvement and say whether it is the intention of the federal government to recover its investment in the various components of this massive scheme?

● (1430)

Mr. Pepin: Madam Speaker, in due course I am quite sure we will. By way of illustration, CN will probably invest \$300 million in this, maybe even more, for the purchase of trains, strengthening of lines, and so on.

An hon. Member: Double tracking.

Mr. Pepin: But all of that is on a full cost recovery basis. As my hon. friend is interested in knowing the full extent of the non-cost recovery aspect, I can advise him this should come up within the next few weeks.

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FISHERIES**LAY-OFF NOTICES TO EMPLOYEES OF NEWFOUNDLAND COMPANY**

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I am sure the minister is aware of the serious unemployment in Newfoundland. Today there are 32,000 officially unemployed. Is he aware that one of our major fishing companies, Fishery Products Limited, is sending out notices to 700 employees informing them that they will be laid off in two weeks' time because they cannot get access to fish stocks, that the northern cod allotment for the offshore fleet, which I think is 47,500 tonnes, will all be caught within the next two weeks, and as a result, there will have to be serious lay-offs in the Newfoundland fishing industry?

Can the minister advise the House what steps he is taking to see that the raw material is made available to the fish-catching fleet to keep the important fishing industry in operation in Newfoundland as well as in the rest of the Atlantic provinces?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I would have thought that a company as important as the one to which the hon. member referred would not have issued lay-off notices on the basis of a press story. Second, I would have thought that, in a situation where the whole argument for increased quotas was based on year-round plants having year-round fish, major companies would not have opened what are, by definition, very seasonal plants, and in some cases put on a double shift—in other words, catch all the fish they could in a matter of a few weeks and then immediately expand the processing operation, which endangers the viability of those plants which have become year round, which are dependent on year round supply.

Those are the problems with which we are trying to deal. I tried to reach a consensus with my Atlantic coast provincial counterparts at a meeting last Friday. There was no consensus, so we will have to try to make the best management decisions we can.

I would have to say that the arguments made to preserve quotas on northern cod, on the basis for the need for market, on the need for year round plants, and on the basis of keeping crews busy 12 months of the year, are shot to pieces by actions of the very companies which were asking for a 12-month supply of fish, by agreeing they should take it in a matter of three or four months.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, I am not interested in arguments. The minister has jurisdiction over the fishery, and the firm, Fishery Products Limited, is a leading firm and has been for 50 years in the Newfoundland fishery with year-round plants and a huge trawler fleet. The company has two trawlers under construction now, specially ice strengthened, at Marys-town, worth \$7 million each. That demonstrates its interest in the future of the fishery.

My question to the minister is this: what will the minister do to see that companies like this one, which has thousands of employees, will be able to keep those employees working this year in fish processing operations in Newfoundland, which has the worst unemployment in the whole of the Dominion of Canada? That is what we want to know. What can the minister do? The minister has jurisdiction. He is snubbing the provincial minister of fisheries day after day.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Crosbie: What action is the minister going to take?

Mr. LeBlanc: Madam Speaker, obviously the hon. member, who has been travelling, has not been following the debate.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Where have you been?

Mr. LeBlanc: It is to protect the supply of fish for those year-round plants that I have asked the companies to exercise—

Mr. Clark: That are putting people out of work.