

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this Government has no intention of downgrading the role of Winnipeg as a transportation centre and as an important part of the CNR. The fact of the matter is that the growth in western Canada should augur well for the future of the CN operation in Winnipeg, including Transcona, because as the traffic increases it will clearly provide more jobs and more activity in western Canada, particularly in Winnipeg.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

SINKING OF *LADY MARJORIE* FISHING VESSEL

Mr. Gerald Comeau (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. This past Sunday HMCS *Nipigon* fired two shells into the partly submerged fishing vessel *Lady Marjorie* in order to sink it completely. I ask the Minister to instruct his officials to conduct a full and urgent inquiry so that the vessel owner can count on having his vessel replaced as fast as possible.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): The short answer to that question by the Hon. Member for South West Nova, Sir, is yes. The vessel he speaks of, the *Lady Marjorie*, found itself in conditions of heavy seas about 60 miles northeast of Halifax on April 28. It took on water to the point where it was awash to the gunnels, its crew had abandoned her, and when asked whether they wished to reboard in order to attempt to salvage her, the response was in the negative and, because the vessel constituted a hazard to navigation, it was sunk.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERMEN—EXPIRATION OF BENEFITS

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries in the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Around the shores of Newfoundland and along the coast of Labrador there is a very heavy ice blockade this year, heavier than we have seen in some years. He will know that after May 15 inshore fishermen will be unable to collect unemployment insurance benefits. That means until such time as the ice disappears there will be no income for thousands of inshore fishermen in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I ask the Minister what steps the Government is taking to deal with this very serious emergency. Specifically, is it prepared to amend the unemployment insurance regulations in order to treat fishermen on a par with other workers and assure their income until such time as they can get back to work again?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raises a matter of serious

concern to the area that he and others represent. In the absence of the Hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration I can say that the Government is watching this very closely on a daily basis. As the Hon. Member knows from the time he came to see me with a delegation from Newfoundland and Labrador, the matter is being treated very seriously, and I know he had the same response from the Minister of Employment and Immigration yesterday as well.

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL PAYMENT

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that response, but I want his assurance that he will speak to his colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and if the Government is not prepared to amend the regulations, which I think is the first course of action, can the Minister in any case assure us that he will ask the Minister of Employment and Immigration at least to make a special payment available to fishermen this year to ensure some income will be in their hands between May 15 and such time as the ice leaves those bays?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Fisheries I understand full well the representations which are being made. The Hon. Member has my undertaking that I will be discussing this with my colleague, and other colleagues if necessary. I will pursue it vigorously.

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TRADE

QUOTAS ON EUROPEAN BEEF IMPORTS

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Trade and the Minister of Agriculture, my question probably should be put to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture. Last December the Government put a stop to the importation of cheap, subsidized beef into Canada, by placing quotas on beef imports. A few months later we are hearing rumours that the Government is crumbling under EEC threats to take retaliatory actions against other commodities. Will the Parliamentary Secretary assure Canadian beef and veal producers that the Government will hold its position and not crumble under the pressure of the EEC?

● (1450)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) is indeed aware of this pressure. One should understand that beef imports are only one part of the import and export activities of the Canadian government, and that the Minister and his departmental officials are presently negotiating in an effort to find a solution. You can rest assured, Mr.