

Oral Questions

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I could table the press releases of the increase in family allowance, the table on old age pension, the increase in the Canada Pension Plan—

Ms. Copps: Table the document.

Mr. Foster: Check with Erik.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): We could table all those documents. The Hon. Member has been in cabinet. I am in cabinet. I want to say to the Hon. Member that when the Cabinet has made its decisions, those papers will be tabled. I hope that, just as the Hon. Member has previously contributed in a rational debate on this issue, including on television, I hope he will contribute at that time as well.

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FISHERIESCANADA-UNITED STATES AGREEMENT ON WEST COAST
SALMON FISHERY

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is in regard to the recent Canada-U.S. agreement on the management of West coast salmon. Would the Minister agree that this deal is part of the pattern of his Government caving in to American demands?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Waddell: For example, in this agreement, in the trans-boundary fisheries in the north of British Columbia, on rivers such as the Stikine and Taku, the Americans get up to 85 per cent of the catch without any reciprocal compensation to Canadians. Would the Minister agree with that statement?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the Hon. Member's question is, of course, no. As the result of a great deal of hard work on the part of some very able Canadians and Americans they have finally brought together in one place, and on one piece of paper, an accord which is going to go to both Governments. This is after 18 years of effort. I must assure the Hon. Member that under no circumstances am I prepared to accept on behalf of this Government any suggestion that the agreement which was worked out was a cave in of any sort whatsoever.

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE REFERRAL

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the Minister himself is quoted as agreeing with Jack Nichol, the President of the Fishermen's Union, that Canadian fishermen are carrying the burden created by the need to rebuild the stocks, and given the fact that the negotiations were generally carried out in secret, will the Minister at least refer the treaty to the appropriate House of Commons

committee so we can hear from the industry and the fishermen before its ratification by cabinet?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, of course the Canadian fishermen are carrying the burden. They are carrying the burden of the fact that, for a decade or more, on both sides of the border proper conservation measures and proper catch allotments were not accepted. So, of course, we have to accept the burden of rebuilding the salmon stocks. That is fundamental common sense.

The Hon. Member, by his own admission, is not an expert in the fisheries. However, he can add and subtract. If we do not have enough fish to go around, sooner or later we have to make an agreement that we are going to rebuild the stock, and that is what this agreement is all about. And it is one of the best things which has happened between our two countries for a long time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION ACT

SIZE OF PAY-OUTS

Mr. Jack Scowen (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. Recent media reports indicate that the Western Grain Stabilization Fund will provide pay-outs of \$17,000 to 135,000 western farmers, which could amount to \$2.3 billion.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Does the Hon. Member have a question, please?

Mr. Scowen: Will the Minister indicate if these figures are accurate?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raised a very serious issue. I do not think it does anyone any good, particularly the farmers who are in financial stress, to engage in idle speculation. The figures are not accurate as to the number of farmers. It is too early to say how much the fund will pay out. I would like to acknowledge the support of the two spokesmen for the opposition Parties for the two small amendments which we will have to bring in in order to make an interim payment. I would also like to thank the Hon. Member for giving me a chance to put some of these things on the record.