

## FISHERIES

### ASSISTANCE IN IMPROVING FISHERY FACILITIES

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question which I would like to put to the minister of fisheries and oceans, as he might be called. Following the recent federal-provincial conference, the Prime Minister and the Premiers agreed in their joint communiqué that initiatives should be launched concerning fleet development, onshore production facilities, harbour and wharf improvements. In view of this announcement, is the minister prepared now to launch initiatives of a long-term nature in line with the joint submission received from the governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland which suggests that funds be made available for the replacement of present obsolete side and stern trawlers, as well as expand the Canadian inshore fishing fleet and wharf facilities? If not, would he tell the House what concrete steps he plans to take to implement the pledge made at the first ministers' conference?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, to answer the hon. member's question fully would take more time than you would allow me. I might say to the hon. member that we expect more money for vessel construction for the fiscal year 1978-79. Companies are not knocking on my door asking to build new vessels. In fact, fishermen are rejoicing at the fact that their catch rate is improving. That is where we want to go; that is the type of initiative we want to see before we increase the size of the fleet.

The hon. member could not justify, with very few exceptions, the expansion of onshore facilities. As for wharf development, he knows very well that in the current fiscal year we will be putting some \$50 million into wharves, harbours and other shore developments. That is quite an increase from the money that was put in seven years ago, when we were spending \$8 million to \$11 million.

**Mr. Crouse:** The Prime Minister and the other first ministers stated that greater provincial involvement in policy development should be facilitated in the fishery, and quick action taken to maximize our economic potential arising from the implementation of the 200-mile limit. What steps has the minister taken to ensure greater provincial involvement in policy development, and when can we expect a joint announcement by him and the provincial minister of fisheries of Nova Scotia that a start will be made with the opening of the swordfish industry in Nova Scotia which, I believe, has already been indicated by the provincial minister of fisheries in my province?

**Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent):** If the hon. member would check *Hansard*, he would find that I have already answered that question. We are awaiting the U.S. decision to remove or maintain the ban on imports of swordfish from Canada.

In answer to the first question, may I say that the hon. member seems to ignore the fact that there were two federal-

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provincial conferences, one in December and one in February; and more will be planned, if necessary, in the next few months.

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## INDIAN AFFAIRS

### FLUORIDE POISONING OF PLANTS AND WILDLIFE ON INDIAN LANDS

**Mr. J. R. Holmes (Lambton-Kent):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. On February 15, I raised the serious matter of fluoride poisoning on the St. Regis reserve. The report prepared by Dr. Conibear and Dr. Carnow for the St. Regis Band Council indicated that fluorides originating at the Reynolds metal company have affected all life forms on the island, and they recommended an epidemiological study be carried out.

● (1502)

Now that the minister has had an opportunity to review that report in detail and is aware of the seriousness of the situation on the reserve, can he indicate if he will reverse his decision and support the recommendations of Dr. Conibear and Dr. Carnow for that study?

**Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, we have never opposed the recommendations of Dr. Carnow's study. What we recognized, and what I indicated to Chief Francis in my letter of February, was that there was a case to be made for a study. We agreed to that. What has been at issue is the scope of the study and whether it should go beyond fluorides.

I am pleased to be able to tell the hon. member that after some very positive discussions with my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, we on this side are prepared to proceed with the study. We recognized the need for the study long before today. We are prepared to proceed with the study. The minister or her officials will be meeting with the band council on March 21 to define the scope of the study and whether it should go beyond simply the question of fluorosis. We think there is an argument for taking the study beyond that, but I think my colleague would like to discuss that with the chief and his band council.

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## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

### ACCESS TO PANAMA CANAL—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister, to whom I have given notice. My question concerns the Panama Canal treaty currently under consideration by a legislative chamber of our strong ally and neighbour, the United States. I do not invite the Prime Minister to intrude upon the deliberations of the American Senate; nevertheless, in view of the importance to the commerce and comity of our western hemisphere and