

Oral Questions

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)): Mr. Speaker, our government is aware of the serious problems being experienced by a number of Montreal workers. We are now considering measures to help these communities, and that is the spirit in which we, as a government, tabled the Canadian Jobs Strategy and Bill C-21, which will help us set up community development programs and improve training. Allow me to repeat what I said yesterday and urge our friends in the other place to ensure that Bill C-21 is passed as soon as possible.

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TRADE

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. During the free-trade debate, fishermen had been given the assurance that the bi-national panel would protect Canadian interests. However, the first decision on salmon and herring went against Canadian fishermen. The second decision on lobster seems to go against them as well. The Americans are going to win again! It is now 2-0 for the U.S.

Why is Canada unable to enforce its conservation standards, as in the herring and salmon case, while the Americans, who are using conservation as an excuse to control the lobster market, have won their case? What is going on?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the first panel report under Chapter 18 on B.C. salmon and herring led to a settlement of that issue which was in the interests of Canada, as well as being in the interests of the United States and it was certainly not a victory for either side.

With respect to the lobster question, there is no report yet. There was an interim report which was given to the parties on a confidential basis under the terms of the FTA, so that they can make further submissions to the panel before the panel reaches its final conclusions.

We will know on May 15, what the final conclusions are of the majority.

[Translation]

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Last September, the Prime Minister promised to intervene to prevent Americans from taking this kind of action. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister was unsuccessful. Does the government have a support plan for our lobster fishermen who stand to lose more than \$30 million because of the free trade panel's negative decision and also, of course, because of the Prime Minister's failure to turn the situation around? Has something been planned for these fishermen?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, there is no report of this particular panel as yet. Even anticipating the report that might be made, it is quite clear that opinion in the lobster trade is certainly divided on this issue and that there are several schools of thought on the issue.

I have no doubt that if lobster fishermen require assistance because of any untoward events that occur with respect to them, that will receive careful consideration, but there is no indication of that at the moment.

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TRANSPORT

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

One thing that both sides of this House can agree on is that there is a shortage of air traffic controllers in Canada, particularly at Pearson Airport. We may dispute how many we are short, but we all know that there is an acute shortage.

Considering this shortage and the hours of overtime that each controller must put in to keep the system at Pearson working, how can the department reduce the number of air traffic controllers by considering overtime cuts at Pearson this year by \$1.9 million?

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon.