

● (1845)

What very clearly must be done today is that the Prime Minister must organize a national advertising campaign, indeed an international campaign, that will reinstate the confidence of people to whom we market fish, assuring them that we thoroughly inspect it and that we have a competent and expansive inspection process. They must be assured that the Government of Canada will no longer be overruling those people who are doing a good job but that it will in fact be backing them to the hilt to ensure that our product when marketed is top quality product safe for human consumption.

This House and the committee before the House definitely has to take a look at the licensing facilities and the threat that this Government is taking something in the order of \$65 million out of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We must be sure that that \$65 million in the November cuts, in the May Budget and in the kind of slashing and cutting that is going on is not coming out of the inspection service, that this Government does not deregulate inspection, leaving it up to the company, as the Minister says, to draw guidelines together.

This Minister says the benefit of doubt goes to the companies. Those are direct quotes from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It is absolutely unacceptable that that course and direction be established by this Government.

It is not too many years ago that it was the individual Canadian who had to make a decision at his table, or in the supermarket, that he was buying quality food. Because of the tremendously serious hazards of doing that the Government stepped in and for a number of years had effective inspection processes. We are now seeing a process by which it would appear that that is being turned back to the companies, that the benefit of doubt would go to the companies, with the attempts to cut back civil servants and cut back the deficit resulting in a diminishing of this Government's resolve to ensure that Canadians can have confidence at their table in the food they consume, particularly in the fish they consume.

The Government must also ensure that our customers overseas can have confidence that our product is thoroughly inspected and is a top quality product safe for human consumption.

**Mr. Mel Gass (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, the fish inspection regulations made under the Fish Inspections Act prohibit the import or export, or processing for export, of any fish product that is tainted, decomposed or unwholesome. These terms are defined in regulations, and normally through his officials the Minister provides an interpretation of these definitions by developing standards for minimum acceptability.

Where an individual or company is not satisfied with a decision of an inspector, the decision may be appealed to the Minister. The Minister must then order a re-inspection, provided the product does not contain harmful or poisonous substances. Following a re-inspection, on the basis of the advice provided to the Minister, the Minister makes the final decision.

### *Adjournment Debate*

There are a number of other powers in regulations provided to the Minister. For example, to process for export a plant must have a Certificate of Registration. If the plant fails to meet requirements of the regulation, Mr. Speaker, the Minister may withdraw the certificate.

### MULTICULTURALISM—FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE— SIZE OF BUDGET

**Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to follow up in today's final debate on a question I earlier asked today, only a few hours ago, of the Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Jelinek). I asked that question, not only because I am the critic for that particular portfolio for my Party, but also because it involves a principle that is very dear and goes to the heart of what this country is all about.

One of the back-benchers on the Government side began the questioning today during Question Period when he said that there was some concern out in the country that the Minister of State for Multiculturalism has a dual portfolio, that is to say he is the Minister of State for Multiculturalism as well Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sports. There is concern—there is great concern in the country that we are going backwards with respect to a vibrant multiculturalism policy. If we go back to the era of 1979 under the then Conservative Government we find then too that the Minister of Multiculturalism was also the Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport and somehow had to divide his responsibilities between fitness and amateur sport and multiculturalism. So there is concern.

Mr. Speaker, when I rose in my place today I asked the Minister why the budget for multiculturalism was reduced by some \$2.255 million or 8.5 per cent in the Estimates that the Government presented to this House last February. The response of the Minister was that as far as the reductions were concerned, I would be very happy to know that the Government has already increased the Budget for Multiculturalism and will proceed on that basis. That is a very serious statement, Mr. Speaker. The only information this House of Commons and the communities across Canada have is that this budget, through the Budget Estimates, was reduced by some 8.5 per cent, meaning \$2.2 million.

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Under consecutive Liberal Governments that budget has always increased. This was the first time that it was decreased. It might have been okay to have the budget stay the same but to absorb a reduction of 8.5 per cent in the budget when Government spending was on average 7.3 per cent certainly flies in the face of the serious priority of Conservative Members who wanted to leave ethnocultural communities with the opinion that this was something very dear to their program. We see that it is not.

The Minister's statement in response to my question is very serious, because it leads me to believe that if in fact the budget was increased, whether by his predecessor or himself, as he has