

Oral Questions

way. All of these things are ways that are important elements, but they have to be combined together. They have to be effectively integrated into an over-all action plan.

We believe that we have made good progress over the last five years in improving the protection of the environment. We believe we have also made good progress in raising the awareness of Canadians to the importance of the environment. But this is going to continue through the consultation process. Arising out of the consultation process, there will be very real decisions taken as to precisely how we can continue this major progress, just as we have had over the last five and one-half years.

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FISHERIES

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of years, we have had an explosion in the population of seals off the north and east coasts of Canada. Together with the foreign fishing that is licensed by this government, we have seen the problem that we have in our fishery today. The Harris report, if it is ever released by this government, will prove those two points.

Is the Minister of Fisheries aware that this year the price to fishermen for seal pelts has dropped by 50 per cent? They have been waiting on this government for a response to their request for price support. Why doesn't the government support these fishermen with the request that they have made to this minister?

• (1140)

Do the fishermen have to go and jump into Meech Lake in order to get support from this government?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am not advocating that these people jump into Meech Lake, but maybe the member should.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Valcourt: The seal issue is a serious one. Our basic approach in this area is in line with the long-term development strategy that focuses on research and development activities rather than short-term solutions

in the form of subsidization. I am quoting the provincial minister of fisheries in Newfoundland. The hon. member is, today, contradicting his good Liberal friends there.

Is the member telling me that—

Some hon. members: Come on.

Mr. Valcourt: Well, we know what happened after the Malouf report—that we have stuck to a policy?. Right now, I view the seal issue as a serious one. Proposals have been received by the fisheries price support board. The application is under review and no decision has been made. As soon as one is made, I will make it public.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, that is a cowardly answer. There soon won't be any—

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is a very experienced member and I know that he would not want to proceed that way, and I ask him to put his question in a more appropriate manner.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, the seals now outnumber Atlantic Canadians two to one. It is the fishermen who have become the endangered species.

[Translation]

Does the minister realize we have seals here, there, and everywhere? Where is the government? Seals eat fish, not pizza!

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, it is true that seals do not eat pizza but the Hon. Member seems to eat more than his share.

[English]

The member seems to have discovered this new word in French, Mr. Speaker, but I want to warn him—you had to warn about a word he used previously—that this word is only parliamentary *en français*.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: It is usually up to the chair to issue the warnings that are needed in this place.