

Oral Questions

fleet in British Columbia and we are not saying the regulations presented yesterday are all bad. However, one of the difficulties in the industry is the lack of enforcement officers both for the fishing fleet, both sports and commercial, and also habitat protection. I would like the minister to give this House some guarantee that, in the omnibus bills which were passed by Treasury Board, there will not be a reduction in the allocation of fishery protection officers on the west coast, to go to other segments of the Fisheries and Oceans Department. Would the minister indicate there is a priority to put enforcement officers on the west coast to protect the chinook stocks which section of the fleet is prepared to regulate to protect its members?

Mr. LeBlanc: Madam Speaker, there will be and there is already a recognition of the problem. In fact when my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, introduces the estimates, members interested in fisheries matters will see, thanks to the support of my colleagues and also the support of members on all sides of this House, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has done rather well, and I thank all those who have supported me in this matter.

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THE CONSTITUTION**POSITION OF PREMIER BLAKENEY WITH RESPECT TO PATRIATION**

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, I direct my question to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Premier Blakeney has been described by Liberal Senator Jack Austin as the pivotal premier on whose support or lack of support the fate of the government's constitutional amendments will be determined. In view of Premier Blakeney's statement last night that he could accept simple patriation and an amending formula, I would like to ask the Right Hon. Prime Minister if he has considered that offer and is he willing to give a response today along the lines suggested by Premier Blakeney.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I am not a party to what Premier Blakeney said last night. I do remember what he said two years ago at the federal-provincial conference held in Ottawa—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: You complained when we read your book.

Mr. Trudeau:—where he went on record as opposing Premier Davis and the position of several other premiers, which was precisely that, to patriate with an amending formula and nothing else. Premier Blakeney was highly instrumental in preventing that from happening then. If he has changed his mind I am happy to hear it. I just wish he had changed his mind a little earlier.

Mr. Epp: Madam Speaker, I would like to address my supplementary question to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. If it is possible for Premier Blakeney to change his mind, I wonder if it is possible for the Prime Minister to change his mind as well.

An hon. Member: Never.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1430)

Mr. Epp: Is there just one way, and does everyone have to march to his drum?

In the so-called deal between the Prime Minister and Premier Blakeney, the terms of which were finally taken on to Hawaii, the so-called Honolulu formula, did the Prime Minister propose to Premier Blakeney an amending formula which would be based on the principle that all provinces should be regarded as equal?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, as to my changing my mind, the hon. member has just realized that the premier has come to recognize the positive character of what this House recognized last May when we all agreed that patriation with an amending formula was the right thing to do. That was then moved by the hon. member for Edmonton East. We accepted that last May, but last summer the premiers—and I have said this time and again—said clearly, on television, that they would not accept that. Even Premier Blakeney has said he would not accept that unless he got international trade and so forth. If they have changed their minds and are coming to a position which this House thought was the right one last May, why did they not say so in Montreal? Six of them met in Montreal. They have not even been able to agree to an amending formula. So what is this business of saying that I should get them together to find a consensus? Even when they meet together they cannot find a consensus.

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RAILWAYS**CROWSNEST PASS RATE—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture in the absence of the Minister of Transport. It arises out of at least three positions the government has espoused through different ministers of the Crown with respect to the Crownsnest Pass freight rates. The Minister of Agriculture has suggested the debate has gone on too long and wants the issue resolved quickly, by August 1 at the latest. The Minister of Transport wants to order a task force to study the matter further. The Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board says a study is impractical and bluntly says nothing will be done other than perhaps a CPR inquiry.

Can the Minister of Agriculture tell the House and the farmers of Canada who we are to believe, or are all the ministers speaking with a hell of a tongue in cheek, to quote a well-known phrase?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, when the hon. member held the position of Minister of Transport, I am sure he also discussed the Crownsnest Pass