

Oral Questions

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, the temporary lay-offs should come as no surprise to the Hon. Member. My information is that the temporary lay-offs which have been announced by the company are similar to temporary lay-offs which have occurred from year to year over time in the past.

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE EXAMINATION

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that this whole affair has put a cast on the total fishing industry, will the Acting Minister of Fisheries instruct the members of his Party who sit on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry to put the affair on its agenda in order to study it in depth and hear witnesses, so that once and for all the issue can be resolved to the satisfaction of the industry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Minister may want to answer the question. However, I think the Hon. Member is asking a question with regard to committee agendas, which is really not a House of Commons question.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: I cannot disallow the question and then allow an answer. That is not fair.

BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCKEYE SALMON RUN

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Acting Minister of Fisheries. As he knows, well in excess of one million sockeye could have been harvested from the Babine run in British Columbia and are now going to waste as a result of federal policy. Will the Minister explain why his Government has continued to refuse to allow commercial, native and sports harvesting of these stocks despite repeated requests to harvest the excess which is surplus?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, the accusation, as embedded in the preamble to the question, and the question are both unfair and untrue. What has actually happened is the realization of the highly successful first phase of the Salmonid Enhancement Program which has resulted in increased stocks. Now, in the name of progress, we should be moving on to phase two as quickly as possible.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is food for thought for the same Minister. Will the Minister explain what kind of Government would place one million cans of rancid tuna on the market and at the same time refuse to allow British Columbians the right to catch food for Canada and the world—some \$20 million worth? Will he explain why it should be illegal to possess salmon—

[Editor's Note: Where upon Mr. Fulton crossed the floor and placed a salmon on the Prime Minister's desk.]

Some Hon. Members: Order, Order.

Mr. Andre: Kick him out!

Mr. La Salle: Very intelligent!

Some Hon. Members: Out, out.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member should know better.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: Kick him out!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The Hon. Member should know better. He will now please rise in his place and apologize to the House.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I am certainly prepared to apologize.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. That is that.

Mr. Fulton: I think that—

Some Hon. Members: Sit down!

An Hon. Member: Stupid!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: It is the only time a fish has more brains than a Member.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Swift Current-Maple Creek.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

FUTURE OF PRAIRIE WILDLIFE INTERPRETATION CENTRE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the environment and, specifically, the Prairie Wildlife Interpretation Centre in southwestern Saskatchewan. This centre was one of five which was subject to spending restraints last year. The centre operated last summer under the joint auspices of the Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada. Can the House be informed as to the future of the Prairie Wildlife Interpretation Centre?

● (1440)

Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will be interested to know that the Minister of the Environment will have at his disposal within two weeks an assessment of how the Wildlife Centre functioned last summer under the arrangements that were made for its temporary operation. He should also know that the Government intends to ensure that this Centre remains open and serves the public. We would like to thank the Hon. Member for his representations and his concern, and we hope he will take some encouragement from the