

We are aware of the problem and have been co-operating with the province in doing some spraying. We will certainly monitor the situation, and are prepared to spray again if the situation warrants it.

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HOUSING

USE OF TORONTO RAILWAY LANDS

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It concerns the decision of the Toronto City Council to approve a major housing plan which will provide thousands of new units, particularly very badly needed affordable housing units in Toronto. The Minister will know that co-operation from the federal Government is required for the land. Will the federal Government co-operate, particularly to ensure that the railway lands needed for this new housing project will be made available at reasonable, or, better still, at no cost, to help solve the Toronto housing crisis?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I must apologize to the Hon. Member. I am not fully briefed on this particular issue. However, I will certainly look into it and get back to the Hon. Member as soon as I possibly can.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Prime Minister agree with the principle that since the railway lands were either given or highly subsidized it would be very reasonable for a return to be given to the people by making them available at a very low, reasonable cost or, better still, simply give them back to the people, to help solve the Toronto housing crisis?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I will take the Hon. Member's statement as a representation, and when we consider the matter I will get back to her as soon as I can.

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● (1500)

FISHERIES

CHUM SALMON CATCH—SAANICH TRIBAL FISHERIES COUNCIL PROPOSAL

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I have given him notice of it. It concerns a proposal from the Saanich Tribal Fisheries Council of southeast Vancouver Island to harvest the excess Chum salmon returning to the

Goldstream River system. As the Minister knows, this particular fish is not generally regarded as being a sports fish.

Last year the Department rejected that proposal and as a result the stock overspawnd and the five Indian bands of the council lost about \$2 million and 45 jobs.

The Department has judged the proposal to be technically feasible and sound. Is the Minister personally aware of the proposal? Has he taken an interest in it? And has a decision been made, or is it about to be made?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for the courtesy he has shown by giving me notice of this question. I am certainly aware of the proposal which poses a very difficult policy question for the Department and for myself.

As the Hon. Member knows, wild stocks of salmon which are not the product of our hatchery but of natural runs, are known as a common property resource. We generally manage the quotas of the commercial fishing fleet to ensure there is no surplus, or a very small surplus of this stock. We have for a long time adhered to the policy that wild stocks of salmon are a common property resource, not to be privatized or turned to the benefit of any group, native or non-native, for commercial gain.

The native communities, of course, have their traditional food fishing rights, and this proposal would violate this long-standing policy. I have it under consideration. The concept has been before my Pacific Area Regional Council for the last several months and I will be making a decision in the next few weeks on this proposal.

REQUEST FOR EARLY DECISION

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that answer. The proposal will create jobs and provide economic development for the bands. It will prevent the wastage of fish which is now happening because of overspawning, and there is a treaty right involved.

Will the Minister carefully consider using the authority of his office and the Fisheries Act, especially Sections 4 and 7, and get behind this proposal from the Saanich Tribal Fisheries Council? And can he tell the House he will make every effort possible to render a favourable decision before the end of this month?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member has pointed out, there may well be a treaty right and long established policy giving native bands and communities first access to returning stocks for food fish requirements, but there is also a long-standing principle that all user groups should have equal opportunity to harvest this common property resource, so that the jobs and economic gains about which the Hon. Member speaks, to the Saanich Tribal Fisheries Council, could well be at the expense of other sectors of the commercial fishery. Good management should