

S. O. 31

[English]

CANADIAN EMBASSY IN CHINA

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, a number of journalists have recently chronicled the financial boondoggle associated with the new Canadian embassy in Beijing, China.

From the lease of 1.3 hectares of prime swamp land in 1978 to the purchase of imported Utah grass and Canadian maple trees at a cost of \$5 million in more recent times, Canadian taxpayers have seen this project go from \$18 million to \$79 million.

Now we all know the current government was not responsible for this spending nor should we believe it condones it. However Canadian taxpayers, like Roger Napier on Thetis Island in my constituency, would like some assurance that this type of chaotic spending will not occur again.

My constituents simply ask that the current government learn from the mistakes of past governments to prevent a repeat performance which we surely cannot afford.

* * *

● (1405)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Elijah Harper (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, like many other First Nations people I was pleased to hear aboriginal self-government addressed in the throne speech.

The inherent right to self-government is a unique and special relationship between Canada's First Nations and the crown. The formal acknowledgement of self-government is a historic occasion even though it is just an acknowledgement of this right which has never been surrendered or extinguished.

In acknowledging the inherent right to self-government the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has announced to move to implement self-government.

I believe the government is finally honouring and respecting the unique positions of First Nations within Canada. I hope the first peoples will join me in saying yes to this renewed partnership.

* * *

THE 1994 TANKARD

Mr. Gar Knutson (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, today the city of St. Thomas in my riding of Elgin—Norfolk will have the honour and privilege of hosting the Ontario 1994 provincial men's curling championships.

Known as the Tankard, this prestigious event brings together the very best curlers in Ontario and I am sure, the world. The Tankard runs until February 14 and I encourage all in the southern Ontario region to come to St. Thomas and witness this excellent event.

To the players: Great curling and may the best team win.

* * *

MONCTON DEPOT

Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the closure of the depot in my riding.

I want to thank the Minister of National Defence for giving the group from Moncton a chance to make their pitch to keep the depot.

Moncton has been hard hit with the closure of the CNR shops, the base and the loss of thousands of jobs. Therefore it is important that we maintain the depot in Moncton.

I believe the group got its points across. There is economic value in having the depot maintained in Moncton with its strategic location between Halifax and Gagetown.

I am sure the minister will take cognizance of all the information that was given to him, particularly the hard working labour force, the bilingual labour force and the efficient labour force that exists at that depot.

* * *

[Translation]

FISHING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, like many Canadians, I was shocked when I read in this morning's paper that the fisheries and oceans department is approving some travel expenditures in excess of \$175,000 for two of its senior officials while the fisheries industry is battling very serious economic difficulties and lack of financial resources.

Since the application of the moratorium on northern cod fishing by the Fisheries and Oceans Department, thousands of workers and fishermen have no more job in the Atlantic region.

In such circumstances, some senior officials of the Department dare to organise a northern cod celebration and spend taxpayers' money when coastal communities have no idea yet what amount of financial assistance they will receive once the northern cod adjustment and recovery program ends on May 15, 1994.

That kind of unforgivable waste—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but his time is up. The hon. member for Macleod has the floor.