

*Adjournment Debate*

increases due to inflation were not very high this year. However, the volume of shipments was badly underestimated, so much so that payments had to be adjusted under the formula contained in the legislation. We agree that producers are now facing cash problems, and that is why we are amending the Prairie Grain Advance Payment Act and the Western Grain Stabilization Act. There is no way to solve the problem raised by the Hon. Member for Portage-Marquette (Mr. Mayer) without amending the Western Grain Transportation Act. I think that the current formula will be effective in the long term and cannot be changed every year to account for short fluctuations in volume and inflation rates.

[English]

NORTHERN AFFAIRS—LOBBY AGAINST FUR TRAPPING  
INDUSTRY

**Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's oldest and most honourable industry is under attack. I refer, Sir, to the fur industry, a business which really started Canada. For many years the fur trade was the most important industry in Canada and had it not been for the fur trade which encouraged people to go out to the hinterland, Canada might even today be only a few small scattered settlements along the St. Lawrence Valley. Even today, the Fur Institute of Canada estimates that about 100,000 Canadians are involved throughout the industry which, I might add, considerably aids Canada's international balance of payments. Not only are trappers involved in the industry, but all manner of traders, merchants, pelt processors, auction house employees, manufacturers and retailers.

● (1810)

In northern Canada trapping today remains the most important part of the local economy. In the Northwest Territories, for instance, we annually produce \$3 million to \$5 million worth of raw fur which would have considerably more value once it has been processed and upgraded. But that value represents production in excess of any other renewable resource industry such as fishing or lumbering. Many people in northern Canada, particularly in my constituency, are dependent for their livelihood, either wholly or partially, on the trapping industry. What is probably more important is that it is a way of life. It is a means for independence. You do not have to be a wage slave if you can go out and get yourself some fur once in a while.

This has all been threatened, Mr. Speaker. There is a concerted attack on the industry by well financed organizations like Greenpeace and other animal welfare rights organizations which are invariably supported by city dwellers, people who do not really know what the trapping business is all about. They tend to play to the hilt the cruelty aspect, even though the degree of cruelty involved in the industry is debatable. In my opinion it is not at all comparable with the cruelty to animals in industries, such as the veal industry in this part of Canada. Animals are kept under what I would consider cruel conditions throughout their short and I assume rather miser-

able existence. At least the animals harvested in the fur trade have an opportunity for practically all of their lives to live in the way wild animals were intended to live. I have seen the signs on buses here in Ottawa playing up this kind of thing. Also there is the use of high pressure and sometimes illegal tactics. I think back to the shenanigans going on at the Frankfurt Fur Fair a couple of years ago where valuable fur coats were sprayed with paint and the young women who were modelling the coats were assaulted.

I asked questions of the Minister last Thursday and he was sympathetic to the cause of the trappers, but the answers I received were not really detailed enough as to what the Government was doing to combat this attack. In my opinion the case for the trapper must be equally as well organized and financed as that of the anti-trappers. A strategy is needed to combine the efforts of trappers themselves, their organizations and native organizations. I know a lot of work has been done here already and I cite as an example the Winnipeg conference organized by the Native Council of Canada not too long ago. I would also include in that group the provincial and territorial Government who legislate with respect to trapping methods and have under their jurisdiction fur bearer management, as well as the federal Government, especially the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I am not satisfied the Government has done all it can on this issue, Sir. We must not lose on this issue the same way we lost on the white coat issue. Sir, the trappers of Canada must not be blackmailed out of existence.

● (1815)

[Translation]

**Mr. René Gingras (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, during the Question Period on Thursday, May 3rd, the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) raised the issue of the ecological lobby and of the threat its activities represent for the Canadian fur industry and the way of life of northern hunters, especially the native people.

As the Minister stated at that time, it is a fact that this lobby poses a serious and unwarranted threat. The seal pelt boycott initiated by the European Economic Community in 1982 clearly reminds us that ecological groups can have a crucial influence on the market. If foreign fur markets give in to this threat, the Canadian fur industry will be seriously affected. In addition, native and northern hunters will be most affected by a possible slump in the fur trade. The consequences of one lost hunting season could be disastrous for the communities.

Because of this, in December 1983, the Ministers of Environment (Mr. Caccia), External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) and Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) submitted to Cabinet a three-part federal strategy based on consultations with all the parties concerned both within and without the Government. This strategy involved, first, a na-