

*Oral Questions*

● (1150)

[English]

**FISHERIES**

## WEST COAST SALMON TREATY—YUKON RIVER

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. The Conservative Government, in its undignified haste to push through the West Coast Canada-U.S. salmon interception treaty appears to have thrown away the fishery on the Canadian part of the Yukon River, thus posing a serious threat to commercial and tourist operations in that area. Would the Prime Minister admit two things to the House: first, that his office asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to quash a public consultation process so that he could get the treaty before the United States Senate; second, that a wide number of groups from the Yukon which will be affected by this inadvertent decision are attempting to have the Government recover its position on the Yukon fishery which was lost by the haste with which it was pushed through Cabinet?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first part of the question is that that is absolutely false and really quite unbecoming to the Hon. Member. With regard to the second part of the question, we have heard representations from various groups, and the general view, and certainly my view, is that notwithstanding a 15 or 20-year period in which our predecessors were unable to conclude an arrangement, we signed one which, while not perfect, is in the interests of Canadians and Americans alike. The commonality of the problem has been acknowledged, and we believe that it is a reasonably fair and helpful way to proceed in the interests of both nations.

## CONTENT OF AGREEMENT

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister has indicated to some of those groups from the Yukon that the Government might be able to salvage this fishery in the memorandum of agreement to be signed at Quebec city. Again, would the Prime Minister do two things? First, would he admit that the treaty is in fact in place and his only function in Quebec city will be to sign it? Second, would he indicate to the House whether or not he has had discussions with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans about the timing of the signing and approval of the agreement by Cabinet so that it could be placed before the U.S. Senate? Has the Prime Minister had discussions with the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans about the political consequences of the timing involved in getting it before the U.S. Senate?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** No, Mr. Speaker, we have had no discussions. I acknowledge readily that we enlisted the support of a truly accomplished and great Canadian, the Hon. Mitchell Sharp, as our negotiator, and he did a superb job, as he always does.

We have tried to act in the interests of the British Columbia fishery. We have tried to be helpful to the British Columbia fishermen. I acknowledge, for example, that there are problems with Clause 8. I am aware of that. They are all perfectible. However, what we are trying to do is always difficult to do when negotiating an international treaty. We never get everything we want. There is a give and a take in every legitimate negotiation. What we believe we have concluded and are ready to recommend to Canadians is a treaty that is designed to enhance the long-term economic prospects of British Columbia and the West Coast fishermen. We believe it is in the national interest, but most important, in British Columbia's interest.

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**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

## U.S.-U.S.S.R. RELATIONS

**Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that he is known as being committed to peace, that he has a special relationship with the President of the United States, and that he had a discussion with Mr. Gorbachev during his recent trip to the Soviet Union, could he indicate to the House whether or not he feels that Canada, as a neighbour, should play a role as mediator between those two countries?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** No, Mr. Speaker, I do not see that kind of a role for Canada. I think our bona fides and traditions as a peaceful nation committed to securing a just and durable peace are well known and appreciated. Mr. Gorbachev himself has a special relationship with Canada inasmuch as it was the first western country he visited. He certainly holds fond memories of it. He was impressed by his meeting here in Parliament with Members of the House. He spoke very highly of that meeting. He also indicated that he views us as a neighbour of the Soviet Union, and the importance of that.

I made the case as forcefully as would any Member of the House, given a similar opportunity, for our non-partisan desire to be helpful in every conceivable way, and to go the extra mile to secure a just and durable peace which involves the reduction and, hopefully, the elimination of arms.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

## ACID RAIN—CANADA-UNITED STATES DISCUSSIONS

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Prime Minister and deals with the meetings he will attend over the weekend with President Reagan. My question is based on the fact that the Prime Minister is going to Quebec city in a very strong position which was made possible by decisions initiated by several Governments preceding his Government, including the initia-