

Oral Questions

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries who has said no to the Labrador Fishermen's Union Co-op for a supply of offshore fish. He allows the multinationals and even foreign countries, including France, to fish northern cod, yet he has said no to the Labrador Fishermen's Union Co-op.

Why has the Minister forced the Union Co-op to buy a Canadian vessel and not allowed it to fish Canadian fish? How can he as Minister of Fisheries, the protector of fisherman, turn down this request by the Labrador Fishermen's Union Co-op?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I was tempted to welcome a civilized question from a civilized colleague but after hearing the question, I am not so sure.

We established a new enterprise allocation system two years ago for the northern shrimp fishery in which the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company has participated with two licences, each being worth over \$2 million a year. It has done very well and we commend the company on its success. But the Hon. Member knows that the enterprise allocation system under which offshore cod, or northern cod more specifically, has made available—

Some Hon. Members: Oh?

Mr. Siddon: These folks over here did not ask the question, Mr. Speaker, but I am sure they are interested in the answer. They will learn.

The Hon. Member knows that enterprise allocations are not surplus to the needs of the established offshore users because that was clearly enunciated by industry at a meeting on the northern cod in St. John's two weeks ago. The Member knows there is no additional allocation for any one group, including the Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company.

FAMILY COMPACT ALLEGED—REQUEST THAT SYSTEM
BE CHANGED

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I know there is no additional allocation, but there is virtually a Family Compact now fishing northern cod. The only people in there are the big players, the multinationals. There is no way for anybody new to break in. I am saying it is unfair to deny those people who live closest to the resource and who depend on it for their livelihood permission to fish northern cod.

You have to change the system. Will you? Will you break that Family Compact? Will you allow the Labrador Fishermen's Union Co-op in to fish, those people who live closest to the resource and who depend on it? Will you do that?

Ms. Campbell (South West Nova): Think of the fishermen first; do not think of the companies.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I know the Hon. Member is very concerned about the Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company and that is obvious as he is a representative of that area. When he speaks of a Family Compact, however, he should recall that he was a member of the Cabinet of the Government that created that Family Compact, which decided who the members would be who got quotas. That is a policy of the Canadian Government that flows from the Kirby Task Force Report which his Government approved.

Ms. Campbell (South West Nova): Change it then.

Mr. Siddon: The Member had better look back in history before he starts asking us to start changing long established policies.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DON RIVER POLLUTION—REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Acting Minister of the Environment. The Prime Minister told us repeatedly during the last election that he was committed to the environment. Just prior to the election the Prime Minister announced \$150 million to clean up the hot spots in the Great Lakes. The worst of these hot spots is the Don River.

● (1140)

Would the Acting Minister of the Environment make a commitment today to begin an action plan on this?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Secretary of State for Canada and Acting Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to renew and confirm the commitment made by the Prime Minister on this subject.