

S.O. 21

[Translation]

FISHERIES**BUDGETARY CUT-BACKS—CONSEQUENCES FOR ATLANTIC PROVINCES**

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, the Budget brought down by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) sent shock waves through the Atlantic Provinces, to the point of threatening their very existence. The many cut-backs in federal spending will have a very severe impact on our region. In fact, we get the impression that the Federal Government has slammed the door shut.

Mr. Speaker, as if that were not enough, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Fraser) got into the act, and I can tell you that the way he did it was certainly calculated to shock the people of New Brunswick.

Imagine, following a ruling by a court of justice, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans threatened the fishermen of New Brunswick! The very person supposed to protect fishermen is helping to create a conflict situation. Mr. Speaker, all of this is happening in the so-called new era of consultation and co-operation the Government promised us.

If this goes on, Mr. Speaker, we are not out of the woods yet.

Maybe the Minister should take a few tranquilizers before opening his mouth in a conflict situation, because his threats of closing down the Atlantic fisheries have only made the situation much worse. The Minister ought to know that one does not settle fisheries conflicts by threatening fishermen. His conduct has raised some doubts as to his ability to settle conflicts of this kind. Statements like the Minister's increase uncertainty in the Atlantic fisheries industry, and the Minister should think twice before letting himself get carried away.

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[English]

ENERGY**DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN OIL AND GAS**

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Following the Western Accord and the Atlantic Accord which have done so much to reinvigorate the Canadian oil and gas industry, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) has again struck paydirt in the North.

In her address to the Beaufort Industry Group Conference held recently in Inuvik, she reinforced the policy of the Government of Canada to proceed expeditiously with the development of northern oil and gas, emphasizing regional benefits and national security.

Of particular significance was her announcement of a comprehensive review of the Canada Lands management policy leading to amendments to the Canada Oil and Gas Act this fall, together with a replacement for the Petroleum Incentive

Program until such time as transportation systems are in place.

The possibility of an Arctic Accord negotiated between the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories, which would address questions such as revenue sharing and the territorial responsibilities within the management regime, was well received, and ought to be implemented in a timely manner.

Such an Accord, Mr. Speaker, would have the same beneficial effects in the North as the previous agreements have had in both western and Atlantic Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY**PENSIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, for two weeks the Right Hon. Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Health and Welfare have been claiming that Canadian pensioners support de-indexation of Old Age Security pensions.

During the weekend, the Minister of National Health and Welfare finally admitted that our senior citizens are not in favour of this Bill to de-index their pensions.

My question is as follows: The Minister has a responsibility to protect the elderly here in Canada. Is the Minister prepared to act responsibly and insist that his colleague the Minister of Finance and especially the Right Hon. Prime Minister of our country restore the real value of Old Age Security pensions and related benefits?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I thank the right hon. gentleman for the question which was put forward, I think, in a very reasonable point of view. He said that I and other members of Cabinet had used the words "fully support". I do not think, with all respect, that those are the words that I have been using. I have been saying that there are senior citizens whom I have spoken to who understand the circumstances and also understand the proposal. I do not believe I ever said that all senior citizens support the deindexing, or the partial indexing, of the OAS. I said that also in the interview, in a very straightforward statement that it is obvious that not every senior citizen or every senior citizens' group does support it.

I think the point that has to be made, and that is why I am pleased that he put the question in that context, is the protection of both the social programs and also their future. I think if we take a look at those social programs and also at what the