

*Oral Questions***FISHERIES**

## DRIFT NET EXPERIMENTS—CALL FOR CANCELLATION

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill):** Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to attend the Canada-U.S. interparliamentary group meetings in Vancouver. I was part of Committee 3 which was discussing areas of mutual environmental concern.

Something which we all agreed upon as Canadians and Americans was the horrible practice of the Japanese and others in the Pacific Ocean with respect to the use of drift nets. Imagine my embarrassment when I found out subsequent to that meeting that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) not only allowed a drift net experiment last year but, after making several lofty speeches about how horrible this practice was, allowed another experiment to continue in drift netting. Drift netting is the marine equivalent of clear-cutting. It is totally abominable and unacceptable.

I call on the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to cancel this experiment, to give some credibility to Canada's international voice on this issue, and to work actively to have all other nations stop this horrible practice of using drift nets.

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[Translation]

**TAX REFORM**

## OPPOSITION TO FOOD TAX

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, having slapped taxes on prescription drugs, soft drinks and long distance phone calls, the Government—contrary to the answers given in the House by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson)—clearly and definitely intends to tax food. Just look at pages 10 and 11 of the brochure *Tax Reform 1987—Sales Tax* where the Government clearly indicates the process leading to a tax on food.

Mr. Speaker, I serve notice on the Prime Minister and the Conservative Government that a country-wide action plan will be launched as early as this summer. Petitions will be forwarded to 3,000 organizations to make sure that this Government never gets around to taxing food, bread and butter.

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**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

## SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT—OPPORTUNITY FOR GOVERNMENT TO ACT

**Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Supreme Court of Canada released its judgment on the equal opportunity program.

Pursuant to this Supreme Court decision, henceforth CN Railway will have to offer 25 per cent of its blue collar jobs to women until such time as they make up 13 per cent of all CN staff. By ruling in favour of Action Travail des Femmes, the Supreme Court has paved the way for women to gain access to jobs which, by tradition, are open to men only. We can only rejoice at this decision.

Yesterday, however, Mr. Gordon Fairweather made a statement to the daily newspaper *La Presse* asking the Government to enforce its employment equity legislation much more rigourously. On a number of occasions this year, the head of the Human Rights Commission told the Government that its employment equity legislation for women was not producing concrete results. He publicly urged the Conservative Government to act more firmly and make its employment equity program compulsory. Perhaps the Conservative Government will draw inspiration from the Supreme Court ruling to show leadership by enforcing Bill C-62 so that Crown corporations will give women equal opportunities under their employment programs.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[Translation]

**TRADE**

## REPORTED LETTER FROM UNITED STATES PRESIDENT TO PRIME MINISTER—REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Could he confirm a report in today's *La Presse* that the Prime Minister received a letter from President Reagan, stating that the U.S. would go along with a trade dispute mechanism that would be applied only at the discretion of the United States, especially in the case of free trade talks?

Did the President really say that in his letter to the Prime Minister? And what was the response of the Prime Minister of Canada?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that I received, as I do from time to time, a query from the President of the United States, following comments I made to him in Venice, and which constitutes a major step towards a final settlement, I hope, of this aspect of the problem.

I will not comment on the contents of the letter or my answer, except to say that we are making the kind of progress that is normal in this kind of situation.