

FISHERIES

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION WHY CHARGES NOT LAID FOR
DESTRUCTION OF SPAWNING BEDS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. In view of the massive damage to the Weaver Creek spawning channel by logging and recreational activity in the mountains behind Weaver Creek, resulting in the loss of virtually the entire chum and sockeye run from the spawning beds—an estimated loss of some 700,000 salmon—and the serious effect this will have on the west coast salmon fishery, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas):

That appropriate charges be laid under the new fisheries legislation, Bill C-38, and that the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment be requested to rise in this House on motions to explain why charges have not been laid to date.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the presentation of such a motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

EMPLOYMENT TAX CREDIT PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR
PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. In light of the major crisis of unemployment that faces Canada and the fact that the only new economic legislation that this government has brought in is the employment tax credit program, which is three months later than it needed to be, can the minister tell the House whether the administrative arrangements are in place or are being put in place for the employment tax credit, and can he give the House a guarantee that the program will be in effect by February 15?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I spoke with my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, who will be responsible for the administration of this program. The program will be in place by March 1. I hope it will be passed very quickly. I should like to say that on Monday the Leader of the Opposition told the House that I was very often away. I am not very often away—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Order.

● (1417)

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear that we would have more economic legislation brought more quickly before this House if the minister were paying attention to his responsibilities as Minister of Finance.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have just indicated that the hon. minister really cannot go back and explain his absence, and I do not think the hon. Leader of the Opposition should be permitted to make a comment on it.

Mr. Clark: We are now told that the unemployed who might look to this employment tax credit legislation for some help will have to wait until March 1 before the only item on the government's agenda is ready to take effect. I ask the Minister of Finance whether or not he is prepared to go to work in his department, to give attention to that department, to bring in a budget before March, and to stop dragging his feet as he has done on the employment tax credit legislation.

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, it took the opposition five weeks to pass a bill which was proposed to the House in the spring. In addition to that, I was fighting against separation yesterday, not like the Leader of the Opposition who is going to Quebec City on Friday to try to make a cosy deal with the separatists.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps it is appropriate that I take about two minutes now, which I will add on to the end of the question period, to remind the House of some of the difficulties we are getting into which relate to my relaxation of the requirements of the question period. In the first two days of our return here I thought it was not appropriate, after the recess, to be too stringent. However, as I permit longer questions with more extensive preambles, I find longer answers with more political input, and from both sides of the House that encourages a lot of barracking which probably would not take place if I were to take a harder line.

I felt things had started out today on a much more positive note, with a very brief question which was going to receive a very quick answer. However, we have begun to wander off the track a little. There is a natural temptation, in the atmosphere that exists in this fourth year of this parliament, to try to interject a few outside aspects in questions and answers. All of us realize that it is in our own best interests in the operation of this parliament if we again, through my guidance, return to a stricter line of short and precise questions, followed by short and precise answers.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, the minister, in seeking the leadership of the Liberal party in Quebec, failed to answer my short and precise question. I asked whether the Minister of Finance