

doing the proper thing. He no doubt reconsidered in the light of developments and did the honourable thing by submitting his resignation. This was within the purview of ministerial authority and the former Minister exercised his authority as he so indicated to me and to the House through earlier questioning last week. I have already explained the other circumstances under which members of my staff brought the matter to the attention of the Ministry.

#### FORMER MINISTER'S STATEMENT

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is again directed to the Prime Minister. I would like to know why the Prime Minister has challenged the Hon. Member for Vancouver South to put his seat on the line. Last Friday the Hon. Member said very definitively that full details had been provided to the Prime Minister's desk several weeks ago. Is the Prime Minister saying that that statement made by the former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is false and that those full details were never provided to him?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend, if he checks the record, will find that what he has said is seriously inaccurate. That is not the situation that prevailed then nor does it prevail today.

#### PRIME MINISTER'S STAFF

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Prime Minister. I have heard him state before, and now again in this House, that the reason he was not personally involved in the dossier was that when members of his staff heard about it, they went to the Ministry involved but, because it was not on television, it did not become an issue. Is the Prime Minister telling the people of Canada that it was not his and his staff members' responsibility to act on one million cans of tuna that were potentially unfit for human consumption, and that his staff's responsibility is only to manipulate the media and television shows?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think I indicated quite clearly the circumstances in which two members of my staff were involved, however peripherally, in this matter. In the first instance Mr. MacAdam conveyed what he had learned to the Department of Fisheries. In the second instance, Mr. Anderson, in the absence of the Minister, was asked for advice as to who ought to be available in the event that the matter was aired. The dimension of television was incidental to the questions that were being put. I thought that in both cases Mr. Anderson and Mr. MacAdam acted very properly.

#### ACTION TAKEN BY PRIME MINISTER

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister now says that Mr. MacAdam was peripherally involved. Earlier on today, he stated that he and his office had taken a lead in the issue. Which was it? Was he peripherally

involved or had he taken a lead in the issue? If the Prime Minister was so concerned about the tuna that was unfit for human consumption, why did it take him more than 24 hours to get it off the shelves of Canadian consumers?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think I have explained completely the circumstances and the celerity with which I acted upon being apprised of the matter. In regard to Mr. MacAdam's involvement, all I meant by the use of the word "peripherally" was that it was peripheral to the main issue. Mr. MacAdam picked up information which he passed on, as I think he should have, to the Ministry of Fisheries and they dealt with it at that level.

#### AIRING OF TELEVISION PROGRAM

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the Prime Minister and it is simple enough. If the *Fifth Estate* program had not been aired—

**Mr. Crosbie:** What would you be asking about?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Order, order.

**Mr. Deans:**—would the rancid tuna still be on the shelves?

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. May I invite the Hon. Member to phrase a question that is not so hypothetical?

**Mr. Deans:** Mr. Speaker, let me put it another way. It is not a hypothetical question because in July there was a rumour that a program was going to appear, the Prime Minister's staff looked into the rumour, the program did not appear and nothing was done about the content of the rumour. If conditions had remained the same and the program had never appeared on the air, what assurance can the Prime Minister give us that his staff would have acted responsibly, having full knowledge of the possible health effects of that rancid tuna, and made sure that the House of Commons was informed of what had happened and that the tuna would have been taken off the shelves?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. That question is just as hypothetical as the first question. The Hon. Member has his views but that question is just as hypothetical. I will invite the Hon. Member to ask the question one more time.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Crosbie:** Next.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I would like the Hon. Member to ask a question of fact.

**Mr. Deans:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think that there is very much doubt about the import of the question. Let me put it another way. Was it the fact that the program appeared on television that caused the Government to move to have the