

shabby treatment of people who have lost their jobs without notice and in demoralizing circumstances. Moreover, the bank staff have not received a penny of the severance benefits to which they are entitled under the Canada Labour Code. In fact, Labour Canada is preparing to lodge a claim on their behalf.

Surely after the VIP treatment accorded to the nameless uninsured bank depositors the Government can stir itself to deal more fairly and expeditiously with the bank's former junior staff who were also victims.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FISHERIES

CANADA-FRANCE AGREEMENT—GOVERNMENT DECISION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. When asked whether the cod deal with France was made by Cabinet the Deputy Prime Minister said in this House last Thursday: "I thought I already answered that question. It was a government decision." However, this morning we had the Minister of Transport, the cabinet representative of Newfoundland, in a television interview saying this: "This happened without adequate notice or consultation with the Government of Newfoundland and the industry and, for that matter, myself. If I had been more involved in this matter I think the course might have been quite different".

My question is this. Was the Minister of Transport, as the representative for Newfoundland, involved in that cabinet decision or not? Which is the correct version of the facts?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition pay close heed to the specific words he read into the record. He said: "This happened" on account of, et cetera. The Hon. Minister of Transport can speak for himself but I believe the reference was to the process, not to the specifics of the agreements which were concluded the week before last and which were based on a government decision.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver—Quadra): Mr. Speaker, that is curious because the Minister of Transport said he was not involved. The Deputy Prime Minister said it was a cabinet decision.

CONTENT OF AGREEMENT—REFERENCE MADE BY NEWFOUNDLAND PREMIER

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it may be beyond the jurisdiction of the Minister of Fisheries to clarify that particular aspect which is why I put the question to the Deputy Prime Minister, so let us turn to the Minister of Fisheries. Last week he said: "The agreement does not exceed conditions which may have been the subject of

extensive negotiations with the Government of Newfoundland". Premier Peckford of Newfoundland responded to that statement on television by calling the Minister of Fisheries a word which you would not permit me to use in this House, Mr. Speaker. In effect he questioned the accuracy of the Minister and his version of events. I ask the Minister, in this case, who is telling the truth?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe my honesty or integrity need be questioned, by implication or otherwise, by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition. I made a statement last week to the effect that the conditions on which the agreement was concluded in Paris a week before last had been discussed, although not necessarily agreed to by the Province of Newfoundland, with the industry and advisers and representatives of the appropriate provincial Governments. I stand by that statement.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver—Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I am yielding to the authority of the Premier of Newfoundland who is calling the Minister's integrity in question.

• (1420)

NORTHERN COD QUOTA

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the same interview the Premier goes on to say that the only time consultation with Newfoundland occurred was when Tom Rideout, Newfoundland's Minister of Fisheries, was called and asked what Newfoundland's position would be if northern cod was put on the table. According to the Premier: "Tom almost laughed off his chair". Why did the Minister put northern cod on the table with France when the Government of Newfoundland opposed that move 100 per cent? When will he get his act together with his colleagues and with the Premier of Newfoundland, because it is a shambles? Someone is not giving us a correct version of the facts.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as was explained adequately in the House last week, a telephone call should have been placed to the Premier of Newfoundland at a particularly important moment prior to the delegation travelling to Paris. Let me add that with respect to all of the terms and conditions and the amounts, which do not exceed those allocations provided in the 1987 groundfish plan, I wish the Hon. Leader of the Opposition would get it straight and help project the truth to the people of Canada. All of those amounts have been thoroughly discussed not only by the Government of Canada but with industry advisers and the officials representing the Province of Newfoundland and the other Atlantic provinces.

Mr. Speaker: Before I recognize the Hon. Member for Sudbury, both in the lead question and in the responses by the Minister there has been reference to the truth. The Chair has taken that to mean accuracy. I hope that any questions that follow will be carefully designed to go after facts and accuracy