

Oral Questions

What assurances can the minister give these people that their fishery will not be harmed by a proposed new treatment facility? Does this insurance include an EARP assessment of the facility, a commitment made in 1991 by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada?

• (1150)

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Delta for giving notice of his question.

I want to assure the hon. member exactly as I have assured the member for Central Nova. Neither the Department of the Environment nor the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under section 35 of the Fisheries Act has yet completed a full and proper assessment of the proposal that has been put forward for the effluent diffuser into the Northumberland Strait. No such decision has been reached nor will it be reached until a full and proper assessment is done and until a full consultation occurs with the fishermen from that region.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): I appreciate the minister's answer, Mr. Speaker, and recognize he is concerned about these environmental issues.

However government officials have suggested that the designation of the boat harbour treatment facility be changed to allow some pollutants in the effluent to be increased by as much as 800 per cent.

Can the minister assure this House that present effluent regulations will not be gutted to allow Scott Maritimes to increase pollutants by 800 per cent?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I have an obligation under section 35 of the Fisheries Act to protect habitat. That is an obligation I have in law.

This government has not hesitated to take the most difficult decisions in the name of conservation of habitat. This is the government that took the decision to close down a food fishery, a basic hook and line fishery, in the name of rebuilding critical cod stocks. Decisions, like those to not allow pollutants contrary to the Fisheries Act into critical spawning areas, would be easy for us to take.

This government will not compromise conservation of habitat for any reason. We have acted forcefully and we will continue to act forcefully in the interests of conservation.

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PRESTON AND AREA DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Recently there has been a lot of controversy over the future of the Preston and area development fund. This fund was established to address the real systemic obstacles to black entrepreneurs in Nova Scotia gaining working capital. The mandate of this particular program expires on March 31.

Is it the intention of the minister's department and his government to continue with this program? If not, will he be announcing a replacement program for black entrepreneurs in the Preston area in the near future?

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his unexpected question.

I assure the hon. member his analysis is correct. The fund will lapse on March 31, 1994. Through the efforts of the member himself as well as other community leaders we hope to be able to replace that particular structure and that fund in the foreseeable future in order to provide economic benefits to one of the most depressed areas of the province of Nova Scotia.

I want to thank the hon. member for his efforts in assisting the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency in that objective.

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[Translation]

PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The minister still refuses to order a public inquiry into the circumstances around the sale of Ginn Publishing to Paramount. The minister would rather refer the matter for consideration to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. However, in this morning's *Globe and Mail*, we read that the minister's Liberal colleague, the chairman of this committee, has made it clear he does not want to conduct an inquiry into this controversial matter.

Does this mean that the Minister of Canadian Heritage suggested referring the matter to the Commons committee, while he knew perfectly well his colleagues would refuse to consider the matter, probably because they also sensed the government had something to hide?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the government has absolutely nothing to hide. I am very pleased to see that hon. members on both sides of the House are capable of making up their own minds and making their views known in committee, and I accept their decision.

• (1155)

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, since the minister is now aware of the fact that his colleagues have refused to examine this matter in committee, is he prepared to show his good faith and concern for transparency