

Mr. Simpson goes on to comment that, in the end, Dr. Harris turned out to be right. The inshore fishermen turned out to be right as well.

My question to the minister is this: Will he prepare and present to the Senate an account explaining how the Department of Fisheries and Oceans allowed this tragic situation to develop, or will he propose, perhaps, that the Senate go into Committee of the Whole to receive an accounting from the present Minister of Fisheries and Oceans?

What the government has done over this five-year period not only affects our efforts to manage the cod fishery and the ground fishery but also our argument that the Spanish and Portuguese fishing industry should act in a more responsible way. I think it is very important that we have a considered report from the government on what is indeed a tragic situation. Will the minister arrange for such a report to be given in one way or another to the Senate?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I will ask my colleague, Mr. Crosbie, for such a report. I recall the Harris Report as does the honourable senator. It is not fair or accurate to say that we dismissed Dr. Harris as a purist. Having said that, I acknowledge freely that social and economic considerations did play a part and continue to play a part in the decisions that are made concerning the total allowable catch every year. They have to, and I cannot hide that for a moment.

I should also point out, however, that it is still not entirely clear what the reasons are for the very recent crisis in terms of the availability of cod. One explanation, of course, has to do with over-fishing by foreigners and others. Another contributing factor may well be, as Mr. Crosbie has identified, the increase in the seal herd which feeds, it is thought, on cod and certainly on capelin, which is food for cod. Another contributing factor may well be climatic conditions in the North Atlantic. Having said that, I will ask for a fuller report from my colleague, Mr. Crosbie, and bring it in in due course.

Senator Stewart: Honourable senators, I appreciate the minister's response. Will he, in communicating with the fisheries minister, make the point that it would be very useful to know why the department went against the information provided over a period of years by inshore fishermen and information given by Mr. Leslie Harris. Why did the scientists come to conclusions that were different from those of the people on the ground, as it were, and what is the possible explanation of why the scientists were wrong, whereas the inshore fishermen were right?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I shall certainly convey that question to my cabinet colleague.

THE BUDGET

ELIMINATION OF LAW REFORM COMMISSION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Jeremiah S. Grafstein: Honourable senators, I have—

[Senator Stewart.]

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I must advise the chamber that under rule 23(7) we are now more than 5 minutes past the 30 minutes allowed for Question Period.

Senator Frith: Guillotine! Gag!

Senator Grafstein: Honourable senators, I have one question.

The Hon. the Speaker: You must have agreement in order to continue.

Senator Grafstein: Honourable senators, may I have agreement to ask a question arising out of the budget?

Senator Roblin: Tomorrow is a good day.

Senator Olson: Go ahead.

Senator Grafstein: Could the government explain to us, if the explanation is the same, the rationale for liquidating another independent federal voice, and that is the Law Reform Commission? I say that because it took more than a decade of public debate in the country to establish that commission. I was involved indirectly in its formation in the early 1970s. Is there a rationale for eliminating the Law Reform Commission?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): They have done very good work, honourable senators, but we feel that the need for them has expired.

Senator Grafstein: I will come back to the matter again.

• (1640)

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED TERRORISM AND PUBLIC SAFETY

STATUS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT FACILITY WITHIN PCO

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton, (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 36 on the Order Paper—by Senator Kenny.

TERRORISM AND PUBLIC SAFETY

SENIOR SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL—NATURE AND EFFECT OF HIGH TURNOVER RATE

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton, (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 37 on the Order Paper—by Senator Kenny.

TERRORISM AND PUBLIC SAFETY

RECOMMENDATIONS OF SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE ON JOINT FORCES TRAINING EXERCISES

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton, (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 38 on the Order Paper—by Senator Kenny.