

STATEMENTS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, I would like to get back to the replies from the—no, my friend, you are the showman of this House. We will wait for you to get up—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McGrath: You always speak from your seat.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member simply ask questions. This is the question period.

Mr. McGrath: I am entitled to do so without interruption. The Prime Minister in reply to the Leader of the Opposition indicated that there is some doubt as to the legality. In other words, he was not accepting the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. Then he went on to refer to the judgment of the Chief Justice of Manitoba when he talked about the situation being hypothetical. There is nothing hypothetical about the closure motion before this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: And there is nothing hypothetical about the—

Madam Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member for New Westminster-Coquitlam.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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● (1450)

FISHERIES

REGULATIONS FOR 1981 SALMON FISHING SEASON ON WEST COAST—FRASER RIVER FISHERY

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct a very urgent question to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. It follows the question yesterday of my colleague. Since the discussions yesterday between the Fraser River fishermen and the minister's Pacific coast officials apparently did not lead to any modification of the government's proposal respecting the closing of the 29 D section of the Fraser, will the minister now instruct his officials at their further meeting the day after tomorrow, Friday, to return to what was offered last December by the Pacific Salmon Commission, particularly leaving the Fraser open between the Pattullo Bridge and Mission Bridge and allowing a one day a week minimum fishery for the gill-netters?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member, who is interested in my giving her reliable information, will forgive me if I tell her that I have not been briefed on the meeting which took place yesterday. I hope this will be done later this afternoon.

Oral Questions

Obviously, I will be glad to give her by telephone an immediate answer and in the House tomorrow, if she so wishes.

Miss Jewett: Madam Speaker, I particularly wish the minister would attend to the request about going back to what the Pacific Salmon Commission offered.

INVITATION TO MINISTER TO ATTEND MEETING

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, may I further ask the minister why he has not replied to the invitation sent to him by the Fraser River fishermen to attend their meeting this Sunday afternoon? It will be a very large meeting held in New Westminster. Why has the minister not had the courtesy to reply, and is he in fact going to attend that major meeting they are so anxious to have him attend?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, it is very much because we are trying to find a solution that the meeting took place yesterday, and I hope that on both sides there was some element of flexibility which might find accommodation. In the case of the sport fishery, I think we are on the road to finding accommodation between conflicting views.

As for attending the meeting, I must say that we are somewhat paralysed in Ottawa these days. I have had travel plans which have been—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. LeBlanc: Hon. members opposite are the reason for the paralysis.

I must confess that I have not found this type of issue is resolvable at mass public meetings where speech-making, and not discussion, is the order of the day.

Madam Speaker: Would the hon. member for St. John's East now like to ask his supplementary question? I would hate to frustrate his right to ask questions, but I did want to indicate, in the only way a Speaker can, that it is important for the Speaker to maintain decorum and to maintain a balance between the different parties in the House of Commons who like to ask questions during the question period. This was the only way I had finally to bring the hon. member to realize this. If he would like to ask a supplementary question now, I will give him the floor.

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THE CONSTITUTION

STATEMENTS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, frustration is something we on this side of the House are learning to live with. It took the Prime Minister almost five minutes—four minutes 57 seconds—to reply to the Leader of the Opposition. I was given less than a minute.