

**Mr. Manly:** Madam Speaker, in light of strong evidence indicating that the Cowichan estuary task force will recommend increased industrialization of the Cowichan estuary, will the minister table the submissions and recommendations his department made to the Cowichan estuary task force, and will he act now to reassure the people of Vancouver Island that he will protect the Cowichan estuary from further degradation by industry?

**Mr. LeBlanc:** Madam Speaker, I will certainly make available any documentation I have on this issue, as we did in the case of the McGregor diversion, where the evidence produced by the experts from my department and the Department of the Environment was so impressive that the project was abandoned without further hearing because it was seen that the negative aspects were absolutely obvious and overwhelming.

I have not yet seen the final report on the Cowichan estuary. I hope to discuss this matter when I am out in British Columbia next week, but obviously I will make public any document we have which supports the case of good conservation and good habitat protection.

[Translation]

LAY-OFFS IN CRAB INDUSTRY IN QUEBEC—REQUEST FOR INTERVENTION BY MINISTER

**Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The minister is doubtless aware that the Quebec and maritimes crab industry is going through a severe crisis and that some plants will have to close down within coming weeks. Can he tell the House whether he will intervene personally to prevent lays-offs in processing plants and ensure an adequate income to the crab fishermen of eastern Canada?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Madam Speaker, I am aware of two problems at this time which are perhaps less dramatic than the hon. member seems to indicate. In some cases the quality of crabs known as white crabs poses a problem to the rate of production of some plants. There is also a slight softening of the American market as a result of the slow-down in the American economy. At this point, the situation does not seem to be as critical as some newspapers would have us believe. In any event, the Fisheries Prices Support Board is now examining that file and I shall report to the hon. member in due course.

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[English]

MINES

TAX INCENTIVES FOR USE OF COAL IN POWER GENERATION

**Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East):** Madam Speaker, my question is for an attractive minister, and it is not the Minister of Finance. My question is for the Minister of State for Mines.

*Oral Questions*

Canada now imports 20 million tons of coal annually—that is, coal and metallurgical coke—worth approximately \$1 billion every year. This is having severe and adverse effects on Canada's balance of payments. The minister has said that she was evolving new policy in connection with the mining industry. When will the minister and the government evolve and announce a package of tax incentives to increase the competitiveness of using Canadian coal in Canada, and particularly central Canada, for power generation and for Canadian industry in total and, therefore, consume less oil in central Canada?

**Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State, Mines):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. He appreciates, of course, the fact that this is a very complex issue and that it will take a considerable amount of time to complete the package. I assure him, however, that we are working in our department on this very issue and we hope within approximately six to seven months to have some idea as to the direction in which we are heading.

● (1150)

I should like to add that we are meeting with members of the mining industry next Tuesday and expect to have considerable input from the industry then.

**Mr. Yurko:** Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I should like to assure the minister that it is not totally complicated. Indeed, all it takes is political will and courage to do something about the situation in Canada with respect to the importation of coal.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Right on.

**Mr. Yurko:** When will the minister prevail upon her fellow ministers in government to initiate and/or increase the transportation subsidies to increase the use of Canadian coal from eastern and western Canada for power generation in the province of Ontario? Can she give us an idea when she will tackle this particular problem?

**Mrs. Erola:** Again, Madam Speaker, this is a very complex issue because, as the hon. member knows, the burning of coal has the side effect of acid rain, which is something we must all consider very carefully. Indeed, we must question whether the increase of coal-burning generating stations is advisable in this particular region. So that is also under question.