

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, this question is the subject of consultation between Canadian officials and the fishermen involved. There were also contacts at the political level.

When the American trade ambassador, Mr. Brock, was here, both my colleague, the minister responsible for international trade, and myself did raise this question with the American delegation and pointed out very clearly that while we accepted conservation measures, conservation measures which would become trade barriers were not acceptable. This will be the subject of further discussion.

SUGGESTED STAFFING OF HIGH COMMISSIONS WITH FISHERIES EXPERTS

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question which I believe should go to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but in his absence perhaps the Minister of Fisheries would also endeavour to answer.

In view of the fact that there are very few people in our foreign embassies with a background of fisheries experience, I would ask if the government would give consideration to staffing more of our High Commissions in strategic fish buying countries with fisheries experts, in the hope that they may assist in expanding markets for this particularly troubled industry which is presently facing serious marketing and economic problems?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of State (International Trade)): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that during the past year we have made substantial efforts with respect to the export of fish products all around the world. As a matter of fact, if my memory serves me correctly, to the end of the first 11 months, up to November 30, our exports to the United States increased by approximately 23 per cent, and exports to other countries were up approximately 19 per cent, excluding the United States. We have undertaken a special program of up to \$750,000 with respect to the export of mackerel from Newfoundland to Nigeria.

I also initiated two or three trade shows in the United States of America and we will have four or five trade shows around the world during the next four or five months to try to promote Canadian fish products.

Mr. MacKay: And not a single guaranteed sale.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

CUTBACKS IN STUDENT PROGRAM

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Since the minister's department has authorized a cutback in payments of \$10 per month to regis-

tered Indians who live and attend schools off reserves as regional budgets are cut, and since lawyers in his department are now saying that the department never had the necessary authority to make the payments in the first place, would the minister clarify for the House why the cutbacks are taking place, and why this useful program is being cut back?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his question today through my department.

The department only has authority for the payment of allowances of this kind on-reserve. It is my information, and I am checking into it now as a result of the hon. member's inquiries, that these Indian students are off-reserve, as well as their parents.

The reason for this is the federal responsibility for Indians on-reserve. We want to utilize the moneys we have available for educational purposes to the maximum extent for Indians on reserve. We think that parents of Indians and Indian children who have moved off the reserve are paying taxes to the provinces, and the provinces should be prepared to afford them the same educational opportunities they do every other resident in the provinces. As you know, the federal government does share significantly in the educational expenses of the provinces. That has been acceptable to many provinces.

At any rate, the short answer is that we just do not have the authority for payment off-reserve.

REQUEST THAT PROGRAM BE CONTINUED

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, since department policies and department economic development policies in general have helped encourage Indians to leave the reserve, and since the education of Indians is generally a federal responsibility, as I understand it, and since these Indian students have enough difficulty in completing their high school education as a result of being faced with social, cultural and economic pressures, will the minister undertake to obtain the necessary authority to continue the program that was carried out so that these students will again be encouraged to work toward the completion of their high school education? Only a very few ever make it through high school as it is.

An hon. Member: It will not cost you much.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I cannot agree with the premise of the hon. member that the policies we are designing are encouraging Indians to leave the reserve. It is quite the opposite. In the last two years, since I have been minister of this department, we have doubled the total expenditures on Indian housing throughout Canada, and I would anticipate that next year we may even triple it in an all-out attack on the question of inadequate housing for Indians.

I would also indicate that in the last budget native economic development was one of the two prime concerns listed for