

Oral Questions

HEALTH

ALLEGED DANGER TO INFANTS FROM CHEMICALS CARRIED BY NURSING MOTHERS—REQUEST FOR STUDY

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the extreme anxiety caused to nursing mothers in the announcement of the findings of research work carried out to test foods, which concerned in particular milk, which revealed that nursing mothers carried an amount of additives and chemicals which could be dangerous to the health of the infant at present or in the long term, and whereas it was found that cow's milk did not carry the same high level of additives and chemicals and did not present the same threat to the infant, I should like to ask the minister what steps have been taken to investigate the situation and correct it?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, upon my return to Ottawa last Tuesday I was immediately informed of the CTV program on the findings of research work carried out by a well known Canadian toxicologist on the dangers of nursing. I checked with my officials and we have taken the necessary precautions. We have appointed a panel of medical experts who will give us more information which will be published as soon as possible and forwarded to all Canadian mothers on an individual basis. The Health Protection Branch of my department has also advised all provinces that hospital milk banks can have all our technical assistance to analyse their samples.

[*English*]

Mr. Rynard: I should like to ask the mother—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rynard: It could happen. Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare if she has gone into the question of possible diets for those additives and chemicals. This could be done right away and would allay this fear that some nursing mothers have.

● (1452)

[*Translation*]

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the male phantasms of this House, I am going to check immediately with my officials whether we can take any supplementary step beside the ones we have already taken.

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[*English*]

FISHERIES

SHORTAGE OF LOBSTERS FOR INSHORE FISHERMEN—CONSULTATION WITH UNITED STATES ON POSSIBLE ACTION

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. In view of the scarcity of lobsters along the south shore

[*Mr. Jamieson.*]

of Nova Scotia which the inshore fishermen contend is due to offshore lobster fishing, has the minister made a study of the hundreds of fishermen who have withdrawn their traps from the water and are now unemployed? Also, what steps does the minister intend to take to hold consultations with his United States counterpart since the new regulations for this fishery which is shared by Canada and the United States, would have to be carried out on an international basis?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member will recollect that last year at this time we had exactly the same type of problem. It is probably due to ocean conditions or water temperatures that the lobster have not moved into the traditional grounds in all districts. The first week records show that in two districts out of four the catch is above that of last year and in the other two districts it is not as high. As to joint management with the United States, this is the subject of discussion and negotiation as is the future of Georges Bank. My officials are consulting with the lobster fishermen but we know that by the end of the season last year conditions turned out to be not as bad as many people tried to make us believe they would be.

DATE OF INTRODUCTION OF FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not indicate how many people are presently unemployed as a result of this scarcity. I submit there are hundreds, if not thousands. In light of the fact that last year Canada imported more than \$183 million worth of fishery products, when can we expect the announcement of a fisheries development policy that will minimize the quantity of fish imported and maximize the quantity we can produce and thereby assist in taking care of some of the horrendous unemployment in Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I have just been to the hon. member's district on the south shore of Nova Scotia and the fishermen there did not seem to share his pessimistic approach to the fishery. We import some fisheries products but we export 85 per cent of Canadian fish production. In a few years we will be the number one exporting nation in the world in fish products.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

EFFORTS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY FROM PRISON IN SOVIET UNION—REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs regarding Anatoly Shcharansky. On Monday the minister indicated to the House that he was inviting the Soviet ambassador in to discuss the case. I wonder if he could inform the House of the result of that conversation and whether any action has been taken with respect to Mr. Shcharansky?