

transport by regulation. I think, by use of the claims fund, we have given the fishermen very considerable protection. I will take this approach in the case of Bill C-48, but at no moment have I abdicated my responsibilities under the Fisheries Act, and if I am not satisfied with the protection the fishermen are afforded under the Fisheries Act, there are powers held in reserve.

Madam Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine.

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Madam Speaker, I had a question for the Minister of Veterans Affairs, but he left the House before the end of the question period so I would like to have an opportunity to question him on Monday.

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● (1200)

WESTERN DEVELOPMENT FUND

REQUEST FOR ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. He will appreciate the fact that under the energy agreement with the western provinces the government will realize upward of \$60 billion over the course of the next five years.

The minister also knows there has been a commitment made by the government to the Western Development Fund, which we now learn has been cut by half, to the amount of \$2 billion. People in western Canada have given up on any thought that there will be any money forthcoming. They now have a new appreciation of the meaning of the word eternity.

With respect to the announcement regarding the Western Development Fund, will the minister tell us precisely when we can expect it, and when the consultative process will take place with western governments so there will be an announcement of this paltry sum to western Canada?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member would describe \$2 billion to \$4 billion as a paltry sum.

An hon. Member: Where is it?

Mr. MacEachen: I believe that is a good illustration of his sense and how seriously we ought to take him.

An hon. Member: You spend that in a week and a half.

Mr. MacEachen: In direct answer to the question, the parameters of the Western Development Fund were set out in the budget last October. If the hon. member will refresh his memory by looking at the budget he will realize he has misstated the facts in his question today.

I have already indicated that the Western Development Fund is still in existence. If there is to be any further

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announcement made to change or confirm the fund, it will be done in the budget, as it was done last year.

MONEYS AVAILABLE IN FUND

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): The amount of \$2 billion is a substantial amount of money, but it is paltry when compared with the amount of money being taken out of western Canada. That is the point I was making. To use a golfing term, the minister and the government are caught "in a bad lie" with respect to this fund. He knows that. We had estimates tabled in the House of Commons last February indicating \$350 million allegedly going to the Western Development Fund. There has been no precision with respect to that amount of money. When may we expect that? Should we expect it during the next fiscal year, or just before the next election?

An hon. Member: The next election.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I do not understand the hon. member's question when he talks about precision. He might put some precision into his questions so I may answer them.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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PETITIONS

MR. PAPROSKI—VIA RAIL—CUTBACKS IN PASSENGER SERVICE— TABLING OF REPORT OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table the ninety-first report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petition presented by the hon. member for Edmonton North (Mr. Paproski) and finds that it meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Nielsen: I have a point of order, Madam Speaker, which relates to the exchange which took place yesterday between myself and the government House leader with respect to Remembrance Day. Since that time we have had a fairly positive statement by the Minister of Public Works concerning the budget date.

Perhaps the Minister of Finance would stay for a moment. Despite my request that the minister stay to respond to my point of order, Madam Speaker, he has left the House. He is still behind the curtain.

An hon. Member: He is hiding.

Mr. Nielsen: He may be hiding.