

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Lang:** The reason for the temporary congestion at Prince Rupert is that arrivals of ships are notoriously unpredictable; there is no way to predict absolutely when a ship will arrive. Our problem in Prince Rupert is in part the fact that it is a small terminal. Therefore, the late arrival of even a single ship can make a tremendous difference to operating capabilities at Prince Rupert. As a result of that, the Minister of Agriculture and myself have been looking very zealously at the question of how we can improve and expand the capacity of Prince Rupert to handle grain. I am confident that before very long we will have a solution to that problem and expand the capacity there. The future for grain shipments through the west coast is, clearly, very good.

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[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES****PROTECTION OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS OF MINORITIES—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION**

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. In light of the ruling by the Quebec Superior Court as to the constitutionality of some sections of Bill 101, and in light also of the impact of the Forest case in Manitoba, which puts into question English unilingualism in that province, does the Prime Minister intend to emphasize his representations to all provincial premiers in order to urge them to formally support the rights of language minorities?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member will recall that in September I indeed asked all premiers not only to protect the rights of minorities in the education system but also to include this protection in the constitution by means of a constitutional amendment. This debate is still in progress. Several premiers have already forwarded their reply. However, I do not anticipate discussing this matter with them at next month's economic conference, but this certainly is our aim and we hope that the provinces will act accordingly.

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[English]

**INDIAN AFFAIRS****NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO—SUGGESTED CLOSING OF RIVER  
SYSTEM DUE TO MERCURY POISONING OF FISH**

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It concerns the ongoing problem of mercury pollution in the English-Wabigoon river basin in northwestern Ontario. In view of extensive testing done by Dr. Pritchard for the Department of National Health and Welfare, and his report of December 15, 1977, to government officials that his examination of a resident of Grassy Narrows showed more precisely than ever before symptoms of methyl mercury poi-

[Mr. Lang.]

soning, is the minister, for the sake of the health and safety of the residents of the area, prepared to recommend to cabinet that the river system be closed to all fishing, as the native people have been demanding for several years?

**Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, I will review that matter. My impression was that my predecessor had recommended that as a course of action, and there was disagreement on that course of action with the province of Ontario. However, I will review the matter and report back to the hon. member.

**Mr. Symes:** Mr. Speaker, in view of the minister's answer and the testimony given by Mr. Carton, director of legal services of the Department of Fisheries, to the standing committee on June 16, 1977, that under the Fisheries Act the federal government could unilaterally close the English-Wabigoon river system without Ontario's approval, and since the Ontario government has stalled for years on cleaning up this mess, will the minister now do the decent and humane thing, close the river and begin remedial action before it is too late?

**Mr. Faulkner:** I will look into that question, Mr. Speaker.

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**ENERGY****FUNDY TIDAL POWER DEVELOPMENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

**Mr. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Now that the maritime premiers agree with the government on the important principle of a maritime energy corporation, will the minister advise the House whether the \$5 million equity payment of the government will be spread over a ten-year term, or paid now; and is payment subject to a favourable report on Fundy tidal power development?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, the three premiers and I reached agreement not only in principle but also on the next steps leading to the incorporation of a maritime energy corporation. We have reconfirmed the objectives and priorities of the corporation. We agreed on share participation and equity participation by the federal government and by the provinces, roughly a 50-50 dimension. We also agreed that it would be necessary, as the first step after incorporation, to set aside a sum of money—not a large sum of money—for working capital purposes. That is the figure to which the hon. member referred. I expect that \$10 million is nothing more than a very small proportion of what will be needed over the years to undertake the massive projects which the people of the maritimes are going to need.

**Mr. Howie:** Is Ottawa committed to supporting Fundy tidal power development at the recommended sites, and to underwriting at least half the capital cost of these projects?