

## FIREARMS REGISTRY

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, less than two weeks ago, on Tuesday, February 28 the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly unanimously passed the following resolution:

That this Assembly transcend party lines and join together in demanding the federal government immediately withdraw Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, which will effectively impose a costly and unnecessary national firearms registry that will have no effect on controlling violent crimes in Canada, and that this Assembly send an all-party delegation to make representation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs outlining this Assembly's intense opposition to the proposed firearms registry; and further, following adoption of this motion, that Mr. Speaker forward to the federal Minister of Justice a copy of this resolution with the relevant transcripts from today's proceedings.

• (1415)

My constituents and I also want to register our intense opposition. I concur with the unanimous vote of the Saskatchewan legislature calling for the immediate withdrawal of Bill C-68 respecting the Firearms Act.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

### FISHERIES

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, turbot is the last remaining species which can be fished off the coast of Newfoundland in the wake of the scourge of overfishing on cod, ocean perch and plaice. For this reason, it is imperative that we protect turbot stocks. The official opposition, therefore, supports the government's decision to put an end to the overfishing of turbot, which led it to board the Spanish vessel *Estai*.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Bouchard:** My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Drawing on information gathered by inspectors who have boarded the Spanish vessel *Estai*, will the fisheries minister tell us whether officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have found any irregularities which could be used to support Canada's position?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for raising this question and for the considerable support that the Bloc Québécois has given to the government regarding this issue.

Concerning the catches found aboard the *Estai*, we found that up to 70 per cent of all of the fish caught were small and immature. This is an important issue for the fishermen of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Quebec and Prince

### Oral Questions

Edward Island. This is clear. Atlantic fishermen have unanimously called on the government to take effective action.

[English]

As the Leader of the Opposition has asked, we have commenced inspection aboard the vessel. Based on the preliminary estimates, not the completed and full inspection, more than 70 per cent of all stock found aboard the vessel is very small, sexually immature fish not capable of reproduction. Some 30 per cent were less than 14 inches, 21 per cent less than 12 inches, and 22 per cent less than 9 inches. A good chunk of the fish are smaller than this pen.

**The Speaker:** I am going to let the hon. member conclude, but I beg him not to use any props even though it is only a fish pen.

**Mr. Tobin:** Mr. Speaker, knowing the House has a good imagination, I can say that a healthy fishery is conducted on animals, living resources of the sea that are between 24 and 28 inches. Many of the fish being caught are smaller than the palm of my hand. That is no prop; that is my hand. This has to stop.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

• (1420)

**Mr. Speaker:** I will take that as a wave.

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate the seriousness and the firmness of Canada's position, will the minister confirm that his government will not free the seized vessel before the European Union resumes negotiations with Canada, which is the condition the Union would impose on us?

[English]

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is proceeding today to do all things required in a very normal and appropriate way in Canadian law. That is the action we are taking today and that is the action we shall continue without fail over the hours and days ahead.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my next question is directed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Could the minister tell us whether or not Canada has taken diplomatic steps to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict with the European Union that will respect the pressing goal of protecting and conserving current stocks of turbot threatened by overfishing on the part of European ships?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that the Government of Canada wishes to continue on the path of diplomacy and to explore all diplomatic avenues at our disposal, for example