

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the member continues to make an assertion that he knows to be absolutely false; that is the notion that the Government of Canada ever gave any consent or ever requested that people expend funds in anticipation of or with a guarantee of a licence to be subsequently let to fish turbot. The member knows that, not just because I have dealt with it publicly and in the House but because the member was privately briefed by me three times and on four occasions was briefed by my officials. On each occasion he expressed an understanding of the need for conservation.

● (1455)

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, clearly, the minister did not answer the question. Since the minister cannot deny having supported the plan, does he promise today to fully compensate the Gaspé fishermen who spent more than \$700,000 and whose only mistake was to take a man at his word?

[English]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday the whole planet recognizes the need for conservation. The whole planet acted on that need at a UN conference. All the members of NAFO acted on that need at a NAFO conference. All the people associated with the fishery in Canada, current stakeholders, people who are already in the turbot fishery, have taken anywhere from 60 per cent to 100 per cent cuts in that stock, yet this member continues to insist that one group of fishermen only in Atlantic Canada, and there are hundreds affected in many provinces, ought to be compensated.

The member knows that the proposition he has put is laced more with a concern out of political advantage than with a concern for conservation. The member ought to grow up and be responsible.

The Speaker: My colleagues, we should be very careful not to attribute motive of any kind, at least motive which is less than acceptable. I would ask that in the questions and in the answers that perhaps we carry a greater amount of respect one for the other.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Sue Barnes (London West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Is it the intention of the government to introduce legislation to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include freedom from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation as promised in the red book?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, this government remains committed to exactly such an amendment and we will introduce a bill to that effect.

I should say in response to the member's question that in doing so we will not only fulfil a commitment and provide for a matter of fundamental justice, but we will also bring the federal statute into conformity with eight provincial human rights acts, some of which date back to 1977 on that topic. We will have the federal law conform with what the courts have in any event been reading into the act for many years.

In the view of this government it is about time that our federal statute reflect the reality in Canada.

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PNEUMONIC PLAGUE

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, pneumonic plague has been a problem in India. Can the health minister tell us what she is doing to reassure Canadians?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the hon. member's question and to inform the House of the steps that have been taken to respond to this issue.

Last Friday night I and my department issued a travel advisory to all Canadians pertaining to travel to India indicating that they should not travel in certain areas or that if they absolutely have to, they should see their doctor prior to leaving the country.

I have been meeting with my officials to make sure that we continue to be very vigilant and monitor what is happening. I have asked that all flights from India be met at international airports. There is an emergency response plan in place.

● (1500)

That being said, there is a very small risk to Canadians at this time. I have asked that a yellow card be issued to all international passengers on flights originating in India, and to ground personnel at airports in order that they may have the proper information to deal with this issue.

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AIDS

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, we have the Minister of Health taking action on a disease that is treatable and not likely to spread in Canada. Canadians expect that.

However, I find it ironic that the minister of immigration has refused the Reform Party's repeated calls for HIV testing for immigrants, a disease that is fatal, invisible and costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to treat.