

board of directors of Pacific Petroleums has not yet met. They will meet on Thursday, at which time they will consider the proposal put to them by Petro-Canada.

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FISHERIES

PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ATLANTIC FISHERIES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. Could the minister tell the House if he will have some specific proposals for federal development of our fisheries when he meets with his four Atlantic provinces' counterparts, and will he take a more conciliatory attitude with them than he has heretofore?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I certainly found most interesting the points made by my colleagues at the meeting of the Atlantic ministers last Friday. I was trying to ascertain what their position was on sharing, consultation, etc. I found a fair difference of view as to what the words meant in English. Maybe if we had been speaking my other official language, I might have understood more clearly.

Mr. McGrath: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the minister if it is the government's intention to participate in the development of our fisheries in the Atlantic provinces and, specifically, if it is the government's intention to co-operate with the government of Newfoundland on the excellent proposals they announced yesterday, so that we can maximize the opportunities open to us by virtue of the 200-mile limit and help reduce the substantial unemployment in the area?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, the substantial budget of this department, plus the \$200 million-odd we put in to keep the fishery alive since 1974, indicates, obviously, the level of commitment of all parties in this House.

As for the plan of the Newfoundland authorities, since I was not consulted and was not informed before the plan was made public, I am at a bit of a disadvantage to comment. I was a little surprised, frankly, that provinces which constantly ask me to consult with them should have—from the meeting last Friday—not informed their colleagues of the details of the new project.

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● (1502)

PRIVILEGE

MR. CLARK—WITHDRAWAL OF IMPLICATION IN REMARKS

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. My seatmate, the House leader

Privilege—Mr. Stevens

of the official opposition, has brought to my attention some debate that occurred in this House on November 10 in relation to a statement I made during debate in the afternoon of Wednesday of last week. That was a statement I made, sir, in response to an interjection by my good friend, the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau), who had moved within shouting range of me and invited me to make a remark which, on reflection, was more extreme than I intended.

As you made clear in your remarks on Friday, it is quite open for me to take no action at all on this matter; that that would be quite within my right. However, I have a very deep respect for the traditions of this House and I am conscious of the example that we can set here in this House, an example which will be seen and, I trust, followed by Canadians across the country.

I want to make it clear, therefore, that I had no intention of suggesting that any member of parliament from the other side of the House, or indeed any member of parliament at all, would deliberately seek to sow hatred in the country, and I want to withdraw any implication to that effect.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I am very grateful to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) for taking that step.

MR. STEVENS—PETRO-CANADA'S USE OF FUNDS TO PURCHASE SHARES IN PACIFIC PETROLEUMS LTD.

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege arises out of the various exchanges that occurred in yesterday's question period, and particularly the exchanges with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie), the President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen), and also the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien). Speaking very generally, the impression was left by those three ministers that the actual takeover of Pacific Petroleums on the part of Petro-Can had no federal implication. It was presented to us that this was a commercial transaction that the government felt Petro-Can were right in entering into. But, in any event, there was no consequence as far as the federal treasury was concerned. Perhaps one of the most direct answers to that effect was given by the President of Privy Council when he stated, as reported at page 1042 of *Hansard*:

It is totally a commercial transaction, financed outside government expenditures by commercial transactions by the private banks of Canada.

I rise on a question of privilege because I feel the answers given by the ministers yesterday interfere in a direct way with my ability to perform as a member of parliament in this House.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, in the budget that was delivered on April 10 of this year, rather than reflecting the borrowings of certain agency corporations the Minister of Finance chose to make it simply a noted item. At that time the Minister of Finance stated:

Direct market borrowings, of \$463 million in 1976-77 and some \$350 million in 1977-78, by agent Crown corporations, specifically Petro-Canada, the Export