

S.O. 21

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): I am in the hands of the House. I will recognize the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne).

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, it is patently obvious that to accuse one Member of deliberately having lied, as the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain just did in my case, having said that what I said was a lie—

Mr. Deans: It was.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): —is unparliamentary and I want the remark withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain has heard the comments of the Hon. Member for Northumberland-Miramichi. The language used by the Hon. Member is obviously unparliamentary and I would plead with him to reword or rephrase his thoughts. He possibly went beyond what he really meant.

Mr. Deans: No, Mr. Speaker. I considered it a lie but I will say it was untrue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1:03 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[Translation]

FISHERIES

REOPENING OF PLANTS IN GASPÉ REGION OF QUEBEC DUE TO
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the fisheries industry in Quebec and on the resumption of operations in four Pêcheurs-Unis du Québec plants in the Gaspé.

In March 1982, the directors of Pêcheurs-Unis du Québec submitted a preliminary plan to the Government of Quebec for restructuring the Fédération coopérative des pêcheurs.

Minister Jean Garon and the PQ Government failed to take any action. In December 1982, fishermen from the Gaspé, the Lower North Shore and the Magdalen Islands established

solidarity committees in order to seek the support of Quebecers for government intervention.

Since the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food indulged in petty politics instead of letting fishermen and plant employees go back to work at the beginning of the fishing season, the Government of Canada intervened, in the person of the Hon. Pierre De Bané.

I am very pleased to be able to inform the House today that as of June 1, 1983, plants in Newport, Rivière-au-Renard, Saint-Maurice de l'Échouerie and Cloridorme, all in the Gaspé, have resumed operations. In all, 350 fishermen have gone back to sea and, with the fish they catch, are providing employment for 800 workers in the processing plants. Without the intervention of the Government of Canada, the Gaspé plants would still be closed as they are in the Magdalen Islands today.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

SUPPORT EXPRESSED FOR FARM MARKETING BOARDS

Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, there is no question that farm marketing boards have proved their importance to consumers because they provide a stable supply of food at reasonable prices. Marketing boards were created because the free marketing of farm products proved unworkable in reality. Because farmers had very little bargaining power, they were always at the mercy of buyers and food corporations, which invariably resulted in unrealistic low prices for their produce. This in turn resulted in financial instability which drove many farmers, if not out of business, close to the poverty line.

In spite of what some special interest groups would like us to believe, marketing boards do not create scarcities or inefficiencies and do not provide excess profits. What they do is stabilize production and income on the farm, the vital factor needed to give consumers a regular supply of food at reasonable prices. This has resulted in Canadian consumers spending only 17 per cent of disposable income on food, the lowest of any country except the United States.

If farmers lose the protection of marketing boards, the result will be a widely fluctuating supply of food with prices that will have no relation to actual costs of production, and where the middle man will guard his profits by passing the pressure on to the producer or farmer. It would be a regressive step if this were ever allowed to happen.