

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

• (1450)

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** Mr. Speaker, the situation and the question describing it today are not new, because year after year, some coasts remain icebound a little longer than would be desirable.

Several programs and million of dollars have been made available to fishermen to deal with these situations.

Last year we announced special funding. Through a partnership established with the provinces and the private sector, we intend to set up a strategy to help fishermen who need assistance. In any case, the department's own programs are available to fishermen, and that is what we are working on.

[English]

**Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador):** Mr. Speaker, let me make it clear to the government that this is not an ordinary year.

These are the worst ice conditions in living memory. This is not an ordinary year. Is the government going to help those people or not? Aid delayed is aid denied. If it is not done this week, do not bother because we cannot take the aid after this. Do it this week.

[Translation]

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** I can only repeat to the hon. member that every attempt is being made in co-operation with the provinces and the various parties concerned so as to provide an appropriate response as quickly as possible, and we are working on a number of permanent solutions.

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[English]

**PORCUPINE CARIBOU**

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

I am sure that the minister is aware that the 180,000 caribou in the Porcupine herd migrate across the North-

west Territories and Yukon to calve on the Alaskan coastal plain known as the 1002 lands.

Since the survival of this herd will be severely compromised by the proposed development of gas and oil in this unique and irreplaceable caribou maternity zone, will the minister tell us what steps she has taken to encourage the Prime Minister to raise the urgency of protecting this area from industrial development with President Bush, since it is at that level that this proposal will have to be stopped?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we do have concerns about the matter that the hon. member raised.

They have been raised with the United States. My colleague, the Minister of Energy, and I have had discussions about this and the implications for Canada and the U.S., as well as with the Minister of the Environment.

We have raised this with the United States, and we will continue to do so.

**Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Prime Minister.

Since President Bush has included the development of the 1002 lands in his energy proposal for the United States, will the Prime Minister today publicly call upon President Bush not to proceed with developments of gas and oil on the 1002 lands, because it would contravene both the spirit and the letter of the 1987 agreement signed between the Prime Minister and his good friend in the White House.

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we have called on the United States to designate the coastal plain as a wilderness area.

We are concerned about protecting the sensitive habitat of wildlife there, and we are also concerned about the economic livelihood and the traditional culture of people who live in the region.

I do not know just when the oil leasing and the refuge will reach the floor of either the House or the Senate, but our embassy is following developments very closely. We are in touch with them and we are making strong representations.