

*Oral Questions*

respect to the interpretation and meaning of the Sparrow decision.

As a matter of fact I met in Vancouver yesterday with representatives of aboriginal groups, the fishing industry, the recreational sector and a representative of the Government of British Columbia to deal with these very issues.

I would very much appreciate the hon. gentleman telling me what his party's policy is with reference to the question of the Sparrow decision and the experimental sale of food fish that we now have under way. Does his party support it or not? Is it supporting the aboriginal groups in their attempts to be included in the fishery or is it opposing them? What is its position?

**Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Is the minister able to tell us whether he has a single watershed agreement for any of the main salmon rivers in B.C.? Is he able to tell us with confidence that he will have regulations in force regardless of race, creed or colour that will make sure the B.C. salmon industry does not go the way of the northern Atlantic cod industry?

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Mr. Speaker, I know we all get infected by the rhetoric we hear in this House and the hon. gentleman has probably caught the disease as well.

We are working with the aboriginal groups toward reaching watershed agreements on the Fraser River and the Skeena River hopefully by the middle of March. That is our target date. We expect to have agreements with well over 100 aboriginal bands dealing with habitat and fisheries management by the time the fishing season opens in the middle of May.

There will likely be at least three agreements, as there were last year, covering experimental sales of food fish in a regulated, understandable and enforceable way. Whether that will be expanded or not, I do not know.

All this work is under way and we hope to have everything in place before the fishing season opens.

**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Indian affairs.

It has come to my attention that the Ontario government may ignore the Williams treaty, ignore the current law, ignore court decisions and ignore the wording of section 35(1) of the Canadian Constitution with regard to existing treaty rights. The intention is to give licences in the form of interim agreements to the seven Williams treaty bands.

Has the federal government been approached by the Government of Ontario? If it was, would the federal government change regulations to give Indians covered by the Williams treaty the legal right to fish and hunt during closed seasons? Would it apply to migratory birds?

**Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington shares with many residents of east central Ontario a concern about different regulations in regard to hunting and fishing as they pertain to the aboriginal people of the United Indian Councils.

Those who signed the Williams treaty in 1923 surrendered their right to special hunting and fishing privileges. The Ontario government seeks to reinstate those special privileges, but must do so only with the authority of the minister of fisheries under the Fisheries Act who ultimately must approve regulations.

However it is the delegated responsibility of the province of Ontario to consult widely with all interest groups and to ensure that there will be no negative reaction or no misunderstanding before such regulatory proposals are brought forward.

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• (1510)

**RAILWAY CROSSINGS**

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. It is as a result of a fatal accident at a railway crossing in Ste-wacke, Nova Scotia.