

Oral Questions

I salute the Canadian Liver Foundation and all its volunteers who worked during this Help Fight Liver Disease Month.

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FISHERIES

Mrs. Jean Payne (St. John's West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about an issue that has been at the forefront of the news in my province of Newfoundland and indeed, all of Canada, the conservation of the turbot stock.

I congratulate the Prime Minister and the fisheries minister on their unfailing commitment to the preservation of the turbot stock on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

• (1115)

Last week I attended the 22nd annual meeting of the Canada and European Parliaments and had the opportunity to discuss with them fish conservation. I spoke to many European parliamentarians, including those attending the European fisheries committee. Many of these people expressed support for Canada's efforts to conserve turbot stocks from overfishing.

As a result of these talks a joint resolution was signed by members of both the Canadian and European delegations to these meetings. The resolution recognized the need to ensure that turbot and other fish stocks are fished in a sustainable manner so they can be conserved for future generations.

I look forward to further progress being made on this issue at the UN conference on straddling stocks that is presently taking place in New York.

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THE CABINET

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, baseball fans are worried about the calibre of play this season if replacement players take to the field. If the second stringers in the Liberal cabinet are any indication, fans should be worried.

No one has dropped the ball more than the minister of defence playing outfield. He missed the signals on the Bosnia peace-keeping play. He misjudged airborne base hits and dropped the Fowler ball. He cannot find the bases because he keeps moving them.

Let us look at some of the other players. The heritage minister writes notes during the game. The minister of Indian affairs is drafting separate rules for aboriginal players. The health minister is headed back to the minors. She swings her bat without hitting. The minister for western economic diversification hits every ball to the centre fielder, named Winnipeg. The justice minister fired a bullet over the pitcher's head and was arrested for playing with an unregistered bat. The environment minister takes too big a lead off to suit the Prime Minister. She will be tagged out.

Fans know it is time to get concerned when the star player, the Prime Minister, tells the President of the United States that Canada had won the world cup of baseball two times in a line.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

At a time when the federal government is bragging about the new freedoms it is giving the provinces in the areas of social assistance and post-secondary education, Ottawa is getting ready to impose new national standards in these areas of provincial jurisdiction, actually restricting the freedom of the provinces and of Quebec.

How can the minister reconcile the statements he made yesterday that the 1995 budget in no way shows any readiness on the part of the federal government to impose more national standards on the provinces, when legislative measures introduced since blatantly encroach on the powers of the provinces and of Quebec in areas which fall exclusively under their jurisdiction?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no new conditions are set out in the omnibus legislation.

As the hon. member knows, the Canada Health Act already has a series of requirements for the provinces to meet. Those are being maintained. There are also requirements under the Canada assistance plan about mobility, to ensure that everybody in need gets assistance. Those are the conditions which are being put forward in the legislation, subject to future discussions and negotiations with the provinces to see how we can provide a more coherent approach to social programming across Canada.

Frankly, the assumption which the hon. member makes is simply not the case.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the minister that he is adding conditions. This having been said, how can the minister justify that the provinces, to whom the Constitution grants exclusive jurisdiction over social assistance and education, will only play a consultative role regarding the determination of the new national standards?