

Oral Questions

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries has seized six fishing vessels and sold them to a Quebec Crown Corporation for a nominal price, and that he has also placed under trusteeship the Madelipêche fish processing plant, which is owned by Magdalen Islands fishermen. Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans inform the House whether the provincial Government has now agreed to make available to Magdalen Islands fishermen the six boats they need now if they are to use the fishing permits granted by his Department?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for her question, and second, perhaps I may be allowed to recapitulate the facts. It was the end of April, and the fishing season was already well underway, when the Quebec Government first took action against the Pêcheurs-Unis by seizing one of their assets. Needless to say, as soon as one creditor demands his due, the others will follow suit the next day, and it is because of this negative and, I should perhaps say, uncharitable action that the Government of Canada intervened the very next day by asking creditors for an extension. The only action the Government of Quebec took against the Pêcheurs-Unis was to seize assets, although as a creditor it was carrying not more than 5 per cent of the unpaid debts of Madelipêche. I am very pleased to be able to inform the House that all other plants that could be reopened, were reopened with the help of the Canadian Government alone. We still have the case of Madelipêche, and as soon as I have made sure that once action is taken, none of the other plants will close down, the problem will be settled. I have to consider all the problems of the Pêcheurs-Unis and not just a single creditor who wants to seize assets. I am therefore pleased to inform the Hon. Member that negotiations are proceeding, and I hope that very shortly, we shall find a solution to the Madelipêche problem that will not be a threat to all the other plants that are still open. Many people tend to forget that all—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

WILLIAMSBURG SUMMIT—REFERENCE TO REDUCING THREAT OF WAR—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton South): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It again concerns the Williamsburg Summit.

Given that a new Gallup Poll shows that 53 per cent of Canadians believe that present Soviet-American tensions may lead to world war, can the Prime Minister state what the Canadian Government will do to fulfil a key sentence in the Williamsburg communiqué:

We commit ourselves to devote our full political resources to reducing the threat of war.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think the role that the Canadian delegation played at Williamsburg, in trying to convey to the Soviet Union and the industrial democracies the notion that we wanted serious negotiations, was the beginning of playing that role. If there are any other ways in which we can play that role, I would be happy to entertain suggestions from the Hon. Member.

Mr. Roche: I will take up the Prime Minister's offer.

PALME COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton South): Madam Speaker, in its arms discussions did the Williamsburg Summit consider the very important Palme Commission Report as a basis for nuclear arms compromise? As the Prime Minister knows, the Palme Commission's Report was signed by representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Third World countries. Did the Summit consider in particular that section which urged Soviet-American agreement on rough parity in medium range nuclear forces at a level which means that NATO will forgo the introduction of new medium range missiles in Europe?

Finally, will the Prime Minister accept the invitation conveyed to him recently by Secretary Andropov to visit Moscow, and use that opportunity to convey to the USSR administration the united front adopted by the Economic Summit at Williamsburg?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, as far as getting that message to Secretary Andropov is concerned, I think it is a fair assumption to make that he must have been informed of the message written at Williamsburg. However, if more assurances were needed, I think it is known that Chancellor Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany will be visiting Secretary Andropov on July 5. I am sure if any emphasis were needed of the seriousness of our intent, Chancellor Kohl would be able to speak for the events which took place at Williamsburg.

● (1450)

Returning to the earlier part of the suggestion as to political determination, no doubt the Hon. Member heard me, in answer to an earlier question, saying for one thing I express the hope that the conference on disarmament in Europe, which is being promoted at the Madrid conference, is something we may see taking place even before December, and perhaps as early as November, but of course that will depend upon the participants at Madrid.

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EDUCATION

AMENDMENT OF CANADA STUDENT LOANS ACT

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State. On Friday,