

Oral Questions

Hon. James A. McGrath (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that this will result in a short disruption for the fishermen who are to be affected. However, I will certainly take the hon. member's question as a representation and I will be prepared to discuss it with him.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE**ALLEGED INADEQUACY OF NORTHERN DEFENCE FORCES**

Mr. Alex Jupp (Mississauga North): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Defence. It is a follow-up of my motion under Standing Order 43 which, unfortunately, was turned down because of the negative votes of some hon. members in the New Democratic Party.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. member has a question, would he put it forthwith.

Mr. Jupp: Yes, Mr. Speaker. My question pertains to the very serious allegations which were made in last evening's "W5" program in which it was said that because of a decade of neglect, Canada's situation in terms of being able to defend our country is in very serious jeopardy and that, indeed, 1,000 Soviet troops could take over our northern installations.

Would the Minister of National Defence be prepared to consider setting up a special inquiry which would have as its mandate the making of recommendations to Canada on the necessary steps which must be taken in order to restore our defence capacity in northern Canada?

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious question and I can say that I, of all people in the House, am well aware of the deficiencies in the equipment of the Canadian Armed Forces. Unfortunately, we cannot turn a situation like that around in six months. A more modest appraisal would be that in about six years we can turn it around. We intend to do the best we can, with the funds which are available to us, to provide equipment and armed forces to ensure the sovereignty of this nation.

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[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**INQUIRY WHETHER BASIC AGREEMENT WITH QUEBEC ON CREATION OF JOBS WILL BE RESPECTED**

Mr. Gilles Marceau (Jonquière): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. On March 14, 1974, one of his predecessors, the Hon. Don Jamieson, signed a basic agreement with Quebec for a period

[Mr. Miller.]

of ten years in order to stimulate the creation of permanent jobs and a more balanced development among Quebec and the other provinces of Canada. This basic agreement and this development agreement was translated into subsidiary agreements.

Can the minister say whether that agreement will be honoured up to its term of expiry and, if so, in order that it does not become inoperative, did the minister ensure that the Minister of Finance will grant the necessary funds and, more particularly, does the minister intend to stand by the letter of the subsidiary agreements being implemented and to respect the timetables agreed upon, so that the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean area may benefit from the \$16 million set aside for this year and the \$55 million earmarked for the period 1980 to 1983?

[English]

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that our department will continue to perform its mandate under the terms of the general development agreement, not just in Quebec but in all the provinces, and that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, has a very genuine commitment to regional development. We will be following through and honouring our commitments.

[Translation]

AGREEMENT WITH QUEBEC—REQUEST FOR MODIFICATION TO ASSIST SAGUENAY-LAKE SAINT JEAN REGION

Mr. Gilles Marceau (Jonquière): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. While he is favourably disposed, could the minister indicate whether new and additional agreements, as well as amendments to existing agreements could be negotiated and signed between the Government of Canada and the government of Quebec in order to assist the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean area which requires major and immediate assistance to alleviate its economic situation?

[English]

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I trust that this will be possible: certainly, it is my desire that it be so. This will be a matter for continuing discussion between ourselves and the government of Quebec.

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[Translation]

ENERGY**REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OIL SUPPLIES WILL BE SUFFICIENT THIS WINTER**

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It relates to the extremely serious, extremely fragile situation, to