

QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

MCDONALD COMMISSION REPORT—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Martial Asselin: Honourable senators, it has been revealed that Mr. Chrétien, the former Minister of Justice, had decided not to launch proceedings against members of the RCMP after the release of the McDonald report and, apparently, had added that had there been any evidence against them, the federal government would not have taken them to court.

Does that statement mean that, with respect to law, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police do not get from the federal government the same treatment as do other Canadian citizens?

● (1410)

[English]

Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I think that explanations have already been given that are public information. They were given in the other place and elsewhere.

To be more precise, I shall take the honourable senator's question as notice and refer it to the appropriate minister for further information in the terms he has requested.

[Translation]

Senator Asselin: I have a supplementary question. When seeking further information, could the minister ask when that decision was made by the cabinet and the Minister of Justice? When were the members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police informed of the decision reached by the federal government and of the Minister of Justice?

[English]

Senator Olson: I will take that under advisement.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

ASSISTANCE TO FISHERMEN

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. My question has to do with the evident leak from the Kirby task force report on the Atlantic fisheries regarding the alarming statistic that the income of many fishermen in Atlantic Canada falls below \$12,035, and, therefore, below the poverty line.

I wonder if the Leader of the Government would determine whether any action will be taken prior to the tabling of that report in order to overcome this sad state of affairs.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government): I shall take that question as notice and obtain further details for the honourable senator, but I can advise him now that—and he knows this—during the past year important steps were taken by the government to assist in the economic problems related

to Atlantic fisheries and Atlantic fishermen, and I could name a few of them.

For example, he is aware of the action which was taken with respect to the St. Anthony processing plant, as well as other action which was taken with respect to some of the difficulties encountered by more than one of the major and minor processing plants involved. Action is being taken. Hopefully, there is going to be an even more concerted and long-term solution coming out of the findings and recommendations of, or, at least, assisted by, the Kirby commission.

● (1415)

Senator Marshall: Apart from the fact that the government has rehabilitated, to a certain extent, the St. Anthony fish plant, one of the problems is the lack of work in the fish plants. I will leave that and accept the minister's answer that he will get a more detailed report.

TRANSPORT

NEWFOUNDLAND—ATLANTIC CONTAINER EXPRESS—
SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government concerning a firm called Atlantic Container Express that was hauling freight between Montreal, Quebec, and Corner Brook, Newfoundland. They have cut out that service, and that is going to hurt the economy of that part of Newfoundland. They are now saying that they would revive that service if they could get a subsidy from the government. I understand that Ace Container Express was made up of two firms that were getting a subsidy from the government.

I realize that I could put this question on the Order Paper but since the Leader of the Government has been giving answers to questions within a week—which he is to be commended for—perhaps he could provide an answer to this one as quickly.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, in our usual attempt to be helpful by getting answers as early as possible, I will do that, although I have to admit that at this point I am not familiar with the background of this particular company's operations.

AIR CANADA

CHARGE FOR CREDIT CARD

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, turning to air transportation, would the minister also find out the justification for Air Canada's introduction of a charge of \$15 for their En Route credit card? I think this is a complete imposition on the public because they have almost a monopoly on air travel in Canada, and besides increasing fares by an exorbitant amount they are trying to introduce a \$15 charge for credit cards, which is ridiculous. Could the minister find out the justification for that action?