

Oral Questions

Cape Bretoners have borne the brunt of the cutbacks and lay-offs implemented by this government. Surely they cannot expect us to accept that the closure of this demonstration farm will have a positive impact on Canada's fiscal situation.

I would urge the government to examine the social and economic benefits of this project and assure Cape Breton farmers that this farm will remain as an integral part of the economy of Cape Breton Island.

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CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, March 28, the premier of Alberta, Don Getty, outlined his government's position on constitutional reform.

I would like to quote from that address: "I will not endorse any concept where everyone else's interests are looked after and the west gets shafted. I won't agree. I just won't sign. People had better understand that when they threaten Alberta, when they insult us because we are sticking up for a Triple-E Senate, those people had better understand that Alberta will have the nation at heart but Alberta will also stand up for itself".

Mr. Getty referred to a constitutional elite that wants a pre-ordered package of reforms entrenched in Canadian law. He continues: "I fear that at times the national debate in Canada has been taken over by people who think they know best and don't trust the real people of Canada to participate".

I fully support Mr. Getty's position that the principle of equality be reflected in Senate reform as well as in the constitutional amending formula.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FISHERIES

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Today seven trawlers with 150 fishermen are sailing to the nose and tail of the Grand Banks to tell the fishermen from the European countries, the 95 ships

that are taking cod there, that they should not do that. The fishermen will do to them what the government could not do internationally: to say that it is in the best interests of everybody to preserve the cod stocks in that area.

Is it the intention of the government to introduce a piece of legislation soon to extend the custodial management responsibility of Canadians to the nose and the tail of the banks as we are the custodians of the stock within the Canadian waters?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister of fisheries will be in the House at a little later time.

All I can say at this particular time is that the position of the government remains the same. Perhaps the hon. Leader of the Opposition may want to defer his questions until a little later on in Question Period. I am sure he will be here.

• (1420)

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs was ready to answer the question and we are willing to take her answer. If she wants to say yes, there will be no problem, we will move on to something else. But I can see that she is afraid because the minister of fisheries is in the House. I will repeat my question to that minister.

I just want to know from the minister of fisheries if he is embarrassed a bit to see the fishermen having to go to the Grand Banks to do what the minister has not been able to do: to tell the Europeans that it is the responsibility of everybody to protect the cod stocks there, and if this government has the intention of introducing a piece of legislation that will extend the custodial management responsibility of the Canadian government to the nose and the tail of the Grand Banks so that we will have fish for our Canadian fishermen in the future.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman certainly finds solutions to be much simpler when he is in the opposition, because when he was in government it took that government about 12 years to achieve the Law of the Sea Convention. During that whole period it never unilaterally extended the economic zone out to 200 miles, but now that they are in opposition the solutions are very simple.