

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, that is exactly it; such a decision will be announced. I think the decision will come forward on April 4. I cannot see why my hon. friend has already made a conclusion on a decision that has not yet been announced.

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FISHERIES**REGULATIONS FOR 1981 SALMON FISHING SEASON ON WEST COAST**

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Madam Speaker, I think my question to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

In two weeks the B.C. west coast salmon fishery season will open, and it will open in total confusion unless the minister can elaborate on some of the announcements which have been made in the press regarding the regulations for the 1981 fishing season. When will the minister state definitively what regulations will be in effect for the 1981 fishing season, and will he now state if the regulations announced through press release will actually be proclaimed?

The fishermen want to know now what regulations the fisheries officials will be enforcing during the 1981 fishing season. They want to know now how many girdies they will have to take off their fishing vessels, and what kind of equipment they will have to put on the ends of their lines.

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, the last reference allows me to think the hon. member's question deals mainly with the troller fleet. In that regard the policy was announced quite a few months ago. There is, this very day, a meeting with Pacific gillnetters along the Fraser area where there is a problem. We are hoping to find some accommodation following the consultation which is going on between my department and the fishermen involved.

REPORTED DELAY IN PROCLAIMING REGULATIONS

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): I thank the minister for that answer, Madam Speaker, but some of these regulations were proclaimed by press release only, as far back as October. They have not as yet been put into regulations and the fishermen have not been able to get any information from the minister's department regarding the kind of gear they are going to be able to use and what will happen to the Fraser River gillnet fishery. I would ask the minister whether the delay in proclaiming those regulations, or suggested regulations, may not be connected to some agreement that may be under discussion presently with the United States in respect of the west coast troll fishery and, particularly, does it have any effect on the interception of Canadian chinook bound for the Fraser River at Point Roberts.

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, it is quite traditional for policy to be announced and, from that, detailed regulations discussed with

fishermen's groups, and then proclaimed by order in council. I have no information that there is undue delay. I will check into this and give the hon. member the information. As of this morning, when I had a lengthy meeting with Pacific coast senior officials, this did not emerge as an issue.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS**JAMES BAY AGREEMENT—MANNER OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

This morning the minister was delivered a strongly-worded statement by the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development concerning the unacceptable manner in which the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement has been and continues to be implemented. What is generally regarded as a very good agreement has been soured, in part by bureaucratic bungling, lack of funding, and endless haggling over the interpretation of the various sections of this agreement. Will the minister now tell the House whether he will press his colleagues in cabinet, his officials, and also the government of Quebec, to honour this agreement in its spirit, and to cease and desist from the narrow and legalistic approach which has been followed heretofore?

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would like to know whether the minister will agree to arrange a visit to the Cree and Inuit communities in northern Quebec in order that he may learn at first hand just how serious the situation there actually is?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I did meet this morning with the hon. member, the chairman of the committee, and various opposition Members of Parliament who are members of that committee. As the hon. member knows, I informed him and the committee that I have discussed this matter with the Minister of Justice. We are of the same view that, although the legal advice we have obtained is that the agreement has stood up in the courts, is very valid, and has not been breached in a legal context at all, we would be prepared to review the agreement, as the hon. member puts it, in terms of its spirit and good intent, aside from a strictly legal interpretation. That review by the Minister of Justice and our department is under way.

● (1500)

Second, as the hon. member knows, I have already agreed with the committee, despite the fact that I have been doing a great deal of travelling, that I should see this particular area, and I have agreed to go up there with some of my officials and advisers within the next ten days to two weeks.