

us to 1991, when it seems that unusual environmental changes occurred. In fact, the lack of capelin and the decline in the availability of cod in 1991 coincide with the occurrence of unusual environmental conditions off Labrador and Newfoundland. For both capelin and cod, the catch levels cannot by themselves explain the sudden changes in abundance and distribution. In sum, both cod and capelin are part of an ecosystem that seems to have changed in 1991 as a result of large scale changes in environmental conditions. As well, it seems clear that the growth of seal herds in recent years has placed considerable additional pressure on capelin stocks, and possibly through them, or directly, on cod.

ANSWERS TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS TABLED

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS—HEADS AND TERMS OF SERVICE

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 52 on the Order Paper— by Senator Marshall.

VETERANS AFFAIRS—CANADIAN ATTENDANCE AT AND CONTRIBUTION TO PÉRONNE MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Hon. John Lynch-Staunton (Deputy Leader of the Government) tabled the answer to Question No. 58 on the Order Paper— by Senator Marshall.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR IN GALLERY

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Dr. Heinz Fisher, Speaker of the Nationalrat of the Republic of Austria.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

AIRPORT TRANSFER (MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS) BILL

THIRD READING—MOTION IN AMENDMENT NEGATIVED— DEBATE RESUMED

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Grimard, seconded by the Honourable Senator Lavoie-Roux, for the third reading of Bill C-15, An Act to provide for certain matters respecting official languages, employees' pensions and labour relations in connection with the transfer of certain airports.

And on the motion in amendment of the Honourable Senator Corbin, seconded by the Honourable Molgat, that clause 4 of the Bill be deleted and replaced by the following:

4. Where the Minister has sold, leased or otherwise transferred an airport to a designated airport authority,

[Senator Lynch-Staunton.]

on and after the transfer date Parts IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX and X of the *Official Languages Act* apply, with such modifications as the circumstances require, to the authority in relation to the airport as if

- (a) the authority were a federal institution; and
- (b) the airport were an office or facility of that institution, other than its head or central office.

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I would like to thank Senator Corbin who presented this amendment yesterday and explained why we are convinced that this amendment should meet with the unanimous approval of this Chamber, if we support the principle of the *Official Languages Act*. I also wish to thank Senator Thériault who spoke subsequently.

I think we should realize what this is all about. This is not a partisan matter. It is about the *Official Languages Act*. The issue is not being raised by us but by the Commissioner of Official Languages—in fact, by both.

To refresh your memory, perhaps I may recall that on June 17, Senator Frith read here in this Chamber a letter he received from the Commissioner of Official Languages at the time, Mr. D'Iberville Fortier, a letter that was dated June 14, 1991. Since Senator Frith read the letter, I am not going to read it again, but I simply want to mention Mr. Fortier's conclusion. The following appeared in the English version of the *Debates of the Senate* of June 17, at page 222.

[English]

In conclusion, you may recall that the Act to privatize Air Canada maintains towards this enterprise all of the obligations under the *Official Languages Act*. I therefore strongly recommend that you intervene in the debate so that Section 4 of Bill C-15 be amended to ensure that all of the provisions of the *Official Languages Act* continue to apply to the designated airport authorities. Any weakening of the current policy would seem to me to constitute an unacceptable and unjustified step backward.

[Translation]

It could not be clearer. The Commissioner of Official Languages, who has a mandate from both Houses of Parliament to ensure that the *Official Languages Act* is recognized and implemented, said categorically that if we pass the bill as it is now without amendment, we would be going against this Act.

What has happened since then? We have a new Commissioner of Official Languages. He was asked the question when he appeared before the Committee on Transport and Communications on November 21, 1991, as my colleague, Senator Corbin, read yesterday. I repeat, I asked the question myself. Here is the question:

When we look at clause IV and the following clause, we should put 5, 6 and 7 back in clause 4 as proposed here.

And Mr. Goldbloom replied:

That would be my recommendation.

Honourable senators, we must look at this issue in a non-partisan way. Speaking of Senate reform— I started a debate