

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have some doubt about the nature of the hon. member's question. Possibly the information ought to be sought in some other way. This is a strong request to the minister to give in this chamber a legal interpretation of the right of applicants for benefits under unemployment insurance legislation. I feel very clearly the minister ought not be required to do that in this chamber in answer to a question.

**Mr. Fraser:** In view of the gravity of the situation, Mr. Speaker, can I ask the minister to tell us now if he is going to take immediate and personal steps to intervene in this situation so that these men can get their benefits and get them quickly. The economy of the whole area covered by the B.C. Railway is now in great jeopardy.

**Mr. Andras:** Mr. Speaker, I note the hon. member's concern. As I indicated earlier, I will fully acquaint myself with this situation. I will not commit myself to intervene unless that is clearly the proper mode for me to adopt. However, I will inform myself and advise the hon. member of the facts and the consequences.

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#### AGRICULTURE

##### UNITED STATES IMPORT QUOTAS ON HOGS—POSSIBLE ELIMINATION

**Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the virtual cessation of exports as a result of hog quotas with very low prices in certain categories of heavy hogs, is there any possibility of pork quotas being lifted between Canada and the United States in the immediate future?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that discussions are still going on at this time.

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#### FISHERIES

##### USE OF NAVAL VESSELS IN SURVEILLANCE OF EAST COAST—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of State (Fisheries). Is the minister's department making funds available to the Department of National Defence so they can continue to use Canadian destroyers on coastal surveillance, particularly at this critical time of over-fishing?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the hon. member that other vessels of National Defence will be designated for fisheries patrol duties as a piggyback operation to normal duties. I also wish to point out that at least three vessels of the Fisheries and Marine Service have undertaken over 250 boardings in the past year. Therefore, there has been continuing patrolling over the past months.

**Mr. McGrath:** Will the minister report on the press conference in Halifax today regarding the course of the

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Canadian destroyer *Annapolis* as to whether that ship will again be used in the immediate future for this type of surveillance?

**Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent):** Mr. Speaker, I will have to await information on this press conference. I know that the crew of the vessel was very enthusiastic about the work they undertook. The forces have expressed willingness to again carry out this operation and I very much hope they will do so.

[Translation]

##### USE OF NAVAL VESSELS FOR SURVEILLANCE ON WEST COAST—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister of State in charge of Fisheries.

Can he tell us if he intends to introduce a similar system on the west coast of Canada?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)):** Mr. Speaker, I think that would be a very good idea. We would have to see, however, if the rules contained in the international agreements that govern that deep-sea area allow us to designate military ships as we do within the North Atlantic Council. If that is possible, I do not see why we could not do it.

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#### NATURAL RESOURCES

##### THETFORD MINES—POSSIBILITY OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES

**Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Following the fire which last night devastated the King Beaver asbestos mining facilities in Thetford Mines, in the province of Quebec, could the minister advise the House whether his department intends to financially help reconstruct this industry which was employing 1,000 workers who are unemployed today?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I have already had conversations with the hon. member for Frontenac concerning the Thetford Mines disaster. I have asked my officials to conduct an investigation with the provincial government and the company to ascertain the circumstances of this fire. There exists at present a shortage of asbestos on world markets. This is a disaster for Canadian producers and it is of national interest to rebuild this very important plant immediately. The federal government is therefore willing to help as much as possible to rebuild these facilities.