

[Translation]

### FISHERIES

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has confirmed that Canada and the European Union reached agreement in principle yesterday in the turbot dispute, subject to approval by cabinet and the officials of the European Union. With Spain and Portugal's rejection of it, the European Union has called for the reopening of the agreement in order to wring even more concessions from Canada and thus bring the negotiations to a standstill.

Could the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans confirm that the European Union, under pressure from Spain, in particular, has rejected the agreement in principle, thus bringing us back to the starting point?

[English]

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I can confirm that what has just been proposed is not correct. Negotiations as we speak are ongoing in Brussels. Good progress is being made. I understand there has been a report, which no doubt the member has seen, which in effect states that the EU has rejected the draft agreement. This is not correct. Good progress is being made and Canada hopes that in due course these negotiations will conclude successfully.

As we have always said, our first and primary interest is and remains an effective conservation regime and the means to bring about proper enforcement to protect these straddling stocks.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans appear so optimistic about the outcome of the negotiations, when the Spanish prime minister, Felipe Gonzalez, said that Spain was definitely rejecting the terms of the agreement in principle?

[English]

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is because Canada is negotiating with the European Union. It is a bilateral negotiation involving Canada and the European Union. Negotiations continued non-stop through the weekend. Progress was made each and every day through the weekend and continues even today. It is a matter for the European Union to deal with the views whether they be unanimous or not of each of the member states.

With respect to the negotiating table, Canada and the European Union sit at that table and progress to this point is being made.

### Oral Questions

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be growing confusion throughout the country concerning the federal government's intentions with respect to health care funding.

The health minister and the Prime Minister have both hinted that funding could be reduced by up to \$16 billion or 2 per cent of GDP and that Canadians in future will not receive the same degree of coverage that they have in the past. At the same time, the government has also suggested that health care funding should be simply frozen or flat lined.

My question is for the health minister. What precisely is the government's agenda for reforming health care, in particular reforming the scope of health care services and health care financing?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the direct responsibility for health care remains with the provinces, we intend to continue to enforce the principles of the Canada Health Act. That act has given us one of the finest medicare systems in the world.

**Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister to reduce the confusion caused, not to add to it.

Last month the Prime Minister spoke in favourable terms about bringing Canada's health care spending more in line with that of European countries. The Prime Minister must realize however that almost all of those European countries to which he refers have a private health care backup to the public system which is how they get more bang for their health care buck.

• (1425)

Does the health care minister support the Prime Minister's recommendation that Canada's health care funding should become more like that of Europe? Does she have a concrete plan for bringing that reform about?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course I support the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has repeatedly said that this country will continue to have a universal medicare system.

Thirty-two years ago today our Prime Minister was first elected as a member of Parliament to the House of Commons.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. Marleau:** Mr. Speaker, during those 32 years our Prime Minister was present for the creation and the building of the best medicare system in the world. Our Prime Minister has nothing to learn from the Reform Party which advocates two-tier medicine.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.