

Oral Questions

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, there are at present before the standing committee the clauses affecting this particular proposal. I do not intend to repeat in the House the discussions that are going on in the standing committee on the Bank Act. I did depart from that position a short time last week, but I do not think it is good practice for us to repeat in the House what is going on in the standing committee.

Mr. Knowles: There is nothing going on.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF FORUM FOR YOUNG CANADIANS

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in our gallery of members of the Forum for Young Canadians which is today celebrating its fifth anniversary. Members know that the Forum spends weeks in Ottawa to intensively study the political process. In the course of five years they have turned out 1,800 graduates. I thought hon. members would like to wish them well in their endeavours.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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● (1130)

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

SAFETY STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN'S BICYCLES

Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It concerns a matter of great importance to Canadian pediatricians, namely, the increasing use of unsafe rear-fender bicycle seats for children which is resulting in serious injuries to tiny tots who are completely unprotected should the rider lose control of the bicycle or should the bicycle be rammed from behind. Has the minister's department carried out any testing of these rear-fender seats to assess their safety?

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to note the hon. member's interest in this matter. He has already informed the officials of my department of the urgency of looking into this and if possible to set standards with a view to better protecting children who go bike riding with their parents. I find the hon. member's concerns to be founded and I can assure him that the officials of my department will immediately undertake studies aimed at better informing parents who take their children with them on bicycle rides of the dangers inherent in such excursions and that they will try to set minimum standards of protection for children.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth): Far be it from me to suggest unwarranted interference by the government in people's lives, but I really do believe the state in this case has a role to play in the bicycles of the nation.

For the sake of our children, I wonder whether the minister would suggest to his departmental officials the possibility of making mandatory the fitting of guards to prevent children's legs being caught in the spokes, and the wearing of little helmets, if necessary, to reduce the likelihood of head injury to these children.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ouellet: Madam Speaker, I share the hon. member's concerns and I can assure him that I will transmit his proposals and recommendations to the officials of my department who will certainly follow them up.

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[*English*]

FISHERIES ACT

MEASURES TO PREVENT POLLUTION OF WATERS

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and is related to this week's ruling by Mr. Justice Martland that section 33(3) of the federal Fisheries Act is unconstitutional.

What steps has the minister taken in response to this Supreme Court ruling? How will the minister prevent the dumping of slash, stumps and other debris into streams frequented by fish while at the same time respecting the provincial right to make laws relating to logging operations in adjacent watershed areas?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I have not received a formal analysis of the consequences of the decision of the Supreme Court in this matter which was given this week. I might say that the provision which was rejected was voted unanimously by Parliament; it may have been drafted a little too broadly.

I will await the advice of the lawyers. Meanwhile, there are other provisions of the Fisheries Act which allow us to prevent serious damage to the habitat and to the environment, and we shall continue to use those powers. In my view, this situation probably underlines the need for a more rational approach to the competitive use of resources such as water—a policy I have advocated all along.

Mr. Siddon: I should like to pursue further the final remarks of the minister. It seems to me that by now the hon. gentleman will have fully reviewed the reasons for judgment and will have consulted with his colleague, the Minister of Justice, who is sitting to his left. So will the minister tell us whether the problem with section 33(3) arises from the principle of the powers as set out therein, apparently in conflict with section 92