

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure about the attitude of the hon. member and his colleagues, but on this point the government is absolutely clear. If we can, we intend to move to recognition of the Peking regime, which in our opinion will greatly advance the cause of world peace.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does that place the Canadian government on the side of the Arab nations in the difficulty in the Middle East?

Mr. Sharp: The answer to that is no. In this particular dispute we remain dedicated only to the attainment of peace. I hope that is also the attitude of the hon. member.

FISHERIES**COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING LICENCES—
REQUEST FOR REFERENCE TO STANDING
COMMITTEE**

Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I will let the Secretary of State for External Affairs rest for a moment and direct my question to the President of the Privy Council. I ask this question not only on my own behalf but on behalf of the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands who would have asked it yesterday if he had not been called out of the House. Will the minister agree to make immediate arrangements for a reference to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry of the question of commercial salmon fishing licences on the Pacific coast of Canada? I might say this is a matter of urgency, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Fisheries has indicated his willingness to have this done.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Abitibi.

Mr. Barnett: Perhaps the President of the Privy Council did not hear my question.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member would repeat his question.

Mr. Barnett: I asked the President of the Privy Council if he would agree to an immediate reference of the question of commercial salmon fishing licences on the Pacific coast to the standing committee. I pointed out that the Minister of Fisheries has already indicated his willingness to agree to such action.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): I apologize to the hon. member for not having attended to his question the first time. Since we will be making an immediate reference to the committee of the estimates for the coming fiscal year, it seems that this would be the best opportunity to raise this question. At the moment the committee system is very heavily involved in legislation and estimates. I think we should do everything possible to make sure they can focus on those responsibilities rather than adding additional orders of reference.

Mr. Barnett: A further supplementary question. Because of the fact that referral of the estimates to committees involves a very wide scope, and in view of the fact that if this proposal is to be dealt with by the committee it must be done by April 1 in order to provide a specific opportunity for west coast fishermen to be heard if they so desire, will the Minister reconsider his position and discuss with the Minister of Fisheries a specific reference of this subject?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member has now made his representation.

SEALS—DECISION ON REQUEST FOR COMPROMISE IN DATES OF HUNT

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): I have a question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries. Can the Parliamentary Secretary answer the question which was taken as notice on February 5 regarding the unlicensing of some people on the east coast of Newfoundland?

Mr. E. F. Whelan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asked if we would consider changing the dates for seal fishing which have been set from March 22 to April 29. These dates have been negotiated with Norwegian government officials and we have no intention of renegotiating. These dates have been set and they will stay that way.

Mr. Lundrigan: In view of the representations which have been made to the minister and members representing the east coast, is the government planning to announce a program shortly which will compensate these people for their loss of income as a result of the elimination of the present seal fishery?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, we are perfectly aware of this. We have discussed the problem of the loss of income these people will suffer.