

him it will be a lot better than the cancellation of programs which the previous government undertook.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER EXPORTS WILL BE REDUCED

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. At a convention in Montreal, the Fisheries Council of Canada accused the minister of being the minister of the fishermen, rather than the fisheries. In addition, its new president, Bernard Blais stated that with the 1980s we are going into a flat period because of the recession in the United States, which will result in lower prices for fishermen's catches. Can the minister tell the House whether he has statistics or studies on hand proving there really will be a 10 per cent dip in the Canadian export market? If so, what steps does he intend to take to remedy the situation?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, it does not hurt me at all to hear that people complain about my being the fishermen's minister more than the fisheries. I am less pessimistic than some producers about the capacity of the American market for continuing to absorb large volumes of fish imported from Canada. I see no sign yet of any softening in the market to an extent that might warrant our reducing immediately the prices paid the fishermen. On the other hand, I have asked the industry to reflect upon the fact that the price of Canadian fish is not going up, like inflation in the United States; in fact, there exists a stability which might be defined as a stagnation of sorts. As for marketing generally, I have indicated that we were going to look into the possibility of co-ordinating it to a larger extent, especially abroad, and that we are trying to reduce our dependence on the American market.

[English]

LIMIT ON SIZE OF CHINOOK SALMON CAUGHT BY SPORTS FISHERMEN OFF WEST COAST

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, I should like to address my question to the minister who has just resumed his seat, whether he is a *pêcheur*, a *pêcheur* or *une pêche*.

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Can he inform the House whether he intends to proceed with the plan formulated by his officials to institute an 18-inch limit on chinook salmon caught by sports fishermen off the west coast?

● (1500)

While he is answering that question, would the minister indicate whether he has some other plan in mind? Does he have any plans for instituting a licensing system for sports fishermen?

Rail Relocation

[Translation]

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has been talking about fishing and fishermen; I just hope he will not refer to anything fishy.

Madam Speaker, my predecessor was about to reach some very difficult decisions and I regret somewhat that the election that stopped him from taking that good initiative came too soon. That being said, I am studying, as my predecessor surely did, the proposals aimed at improving fisheries management, sport fishing particularly, to apply better conservation policies. I am not now in a position to announce specific decisions in that regard. I shall inform the House in due course.

[English]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): I wonder, then, Madam Speaker, if the minister would assure the House that he has no plans for increasing the commercial licences for 1980 or 1981 on the west coast and, if not, would he say when the announcement of changes will be made, so that the uncertainties which are now plaguing west coast fishermen can be laid to rest?

Mr. LeBlanc: Madam Speaker, the discussions which I had with the advisory council created by my predecessor—which turned out to be a very positive initiative—led me to believe that it would be very useful to have a further exchange in June. I intend to spend a fair amount of time on the west coast in the middle of June, to put forward some proposals and to hear the reactions before a decision is made. That will be part of the discussion.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

WINNIPEG RAIL RELOCATION—REPLY OF MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, in answering or attempting to answer a question today, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) indicated that at a meeting held on Sunday with regard to Winnipeg rail relocation at the CPR yards no Conservative member was present at that meeting. I want to inform you, Madam Speaker, that in fact there were representatives there of the city of Winnipeg and of the provincial government. I at no time had an invitation from the sponsoring group to appear at that meeting, but I want to indicate that if the minister persists in that kind of half truth in this House—

Mr. Axworthy: Were you there?

Mr. Epp:—the point has to be made—

An hon. Member: Were you there or not?

Mr. Epp: As the Winnipeg *Free Press* editorialized the next day, we would like to know from the minister what programs