

Oral Questions

Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, the minister lets the provinces take the blame, and meanwhile, the lives of thousands of people are at stake.

When will the minister realize that the problem is at this level, that it must be solved at this level and that she is responsible for doing so?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, they change their tune when it suits them.

I can inform the House that hepatitis has been found in the blood supply since the 1940s. In 1990, a way was found to test blood for Hepatitis C. Since that time, all prospective donors are tested. Although many people give blood, it was found that, in a given year, the number of people who tested positive for Hepatitis C was 0.3 per cent.

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[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

It would appear we are poised on the brink of a salmon war on Canada's west coast. I would like to know what steps the government has taken to ensure that Canada's salmon stocks are not decimated by this action.

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Delta for his question and his concern and that of the hon. member for Kamloops who spoke earlier on this subject.

• (1455)

I want to assure the House that Canada is not poised on the edge of a salmon war. We will not conduct a fishery as a free for all nor will we pursue a catch and kill policy. We will fish unilaterally and only because we are not able to make a bilateral arrangement with the United States.

We do not doubt the will or the intent of the U.S. administration to make an arrangement with us, but we doubt the ability of the U.S. administration to pull Alaska, Washington, Oregon and California together around one sound game plan. Our choices in those circumstances are to acquiesce and have Washington run our fishery, or to stand up and be counted in the interest of Canadian fishermen and that is what we will do.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta): Mr. Speaker, unilateral action by Canada and unilateral action by the United States equals a fish war and a fish war is the ultimate step.

What happens if Canada's fish stocks are being decimated by this action and where do we go from there? How will we advance Canada's position on this issue?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I must say again there is no intent, nor will there be a wanton decimation of Canada's fish stocks.

Indeed all parties in the British Columbia legislature, the New Democratic Party, the Reform Party, the Liberal Party and the Socred Party as well, have unanimously passed a motion supporting the position of the Government of Canada vis-à-vis the United States. There is sound and very solid support throughout the industry in British Columbia for the tough posture we are taking.

We are not going to throw away or destroy our own resource but equally we are not going to throw away or destroy our own fishermen and our own industry. Canada will fish aggressively but we remain ready, willing and able, indeed anxious at any time to sign a sensible and sound conservation based bilateral fish arrangement.

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GAMBLING

Mr. Roger Gallaway (Sarnia—Lambton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The federal government has jurisdiction with respect to gaming on the Great Lakes. American authorities have recently approved such activity on certain Great Lakes cruise ships.

Will the minister encourage Canadian tourism and job creation by allowing gambling on Great Lakes cruise ships operating in Canadian waters?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows the Criminal Code of Canada deals with gambling by providing for blanket prohibition and then allowing it by exceptions specifically in relation to the provinces.

The provinces are allowed to operate lottery schemes. They are allowed to be the operators of casinos with table games and slot machines. There is no provision in the Criminal Code at present to allow the federal government to operate or to licence casinos directly for gambling.

I must tell the hon. member there is no plan at present to amend the gambling provisions of the code to provide for additional exceptions, such as the private operation of casinos as he suggests. In order to do such a thing at least two requirements would have to be met. First we would have to negotiate with the provinces for an agreement to that effect. Second, we would have to deal with the provisions of the coasting trade act which has regulations that would pertain to any such arrangement.

If the hon. member cared to pursue in detail any aspect of this question, I would be happy to meet with him for that purpose.