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Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Questions on the Order Paper

Hon. Roger Gallaway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. John Cummins (Delta—South Richmond, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On September 24, 2003, I put forward a question, No. 257 on the Order Paper, regarding halibut and sablefish aquaculture. Parliament prorogued and the question slid off the table. I asked the same question on February 2, 2004. It is now Question No. 13.

Through access to information, I got a number of documents. One of those documents, a December 4, 2004 memo from the Director of Policy, Office of Sustainable Aquaculture, stated that the response to my first question was completed and left their office three weeks ago. In a December 5, 2003 memo, Paul Lyon, Policy Analyst, Office of Sustainable Aquaculture, stated:

I understand the response to Mr. Cummins' Question 257 was completed and would like a copy. While I recognize the House has prorogued, and the response is no longer required the information could still be used to respond to future inquiries on the subject.

He further stated:

I suspect [Mr.] Cummins will raise it again. Having it ready to advance for final approvals might not be a bad idea.

It was six months ago that I asked the question. If we have open and transparent government, as the Prime Minister has suggested, I am wondering why that question I asked so long ago has not been answered.

Hon. Roger Gallaway: Mr. Speaker, the member has already acknowledged that questions would have died with prorogation. If he has filed another question, he knows there are 45 days to respond from this side. If indeed he is correct in terms of his discussion with someone, somewhere, then it will indeed come within the 45 day period and it will not be a problem.

The Speaker: Shall the remaining questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.