

gladly include the words "deliberate and conscious", because I think that is what it was. In any event, the minister told us he would gladly refer this subject matter to the Committee on Fisheries and Forestry for examination so that the fishermen could come and present their ideas, complaints and objections about the plan. He never carried forward that commitment or did anything about it.

We have on the coast of British Columbia entire communities, many of them small, many of them comprising solely native Indian people, who have a difficult enough time as it is. The people in these communities can see their entire community being wiped out and the sole base of their economy disappearing if these programs—and this particular program—is put into effect. I submit that that sort of activity, coupled with the fact that there is a continuation of the practice of permitting fish-packing companies to engage in and control to a certain extent the fishing industry, militates against the individual fisherman and prevents his being able to prosecute an industry fully and engage in it for purposes of his income and personal satisfaction.

There is no point in reciting the names of many of these communities. I am sure the minister knows which communities they are because he has received communications about them. I believe it behooves us to have serious doubts, and to reflect them here, about establishing a czar of the environment who so far has not done anything in a real sense to attempt to clean up the environment and who has had a pretty dismal record in terms of doing anything worth while and helpful for the fishermen of our nation.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my intervention will be very short. I wish to deal primarily with what I suppose really involves the title and power of the minister and deputy minister. It seems to me the purport of the amendment is reasonable. There are many other departments in which there are, shall I say, not joint but separate responsibilities. The Department of National Revenue, for instance, has a deputy minister for customs and excise and a deputy minister for income tax. In the Department of National Health and Welfare there is a deputy minister for health and a deputy minister for welfare.

In this instance there is more than adequate precedent and more than adequate reason, if it is felt there should be a deputy minister in charge of the environment—and that has been the purpose of the exercise in setting up this new ministry—that the Department of Fisheries and Forestry and the deputy minister of fisheries should not be downgraded. It is not a question of its costing very much, although the salaries of these eminent people are quite considerable. It is only a transition from the proposal to have an assistant deputy minister to the proposal to have a deputy minister. I believe the request is eminently reasonable.

● (4:00 p.m.)

Why should the assistant deputy minister of fisheries, charged with a particular responsibility, have to report through the deputy minister of the environment? I will

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not criticize the personality of the deputy minister of the environment who was formerly a construction engineer, an administrator, but whose bent is toward the engineering field; but I presume he was hired for the particular purpose, after his successful career in other places, of dealing with the environment. Now he would be told that he will also have to deal with fisheries. If there is a wrong way to do it, you can trust the so-called slick operators of this government to find it. It seems to me that they are persisting in their error in a stiff-necked manner.

I support the amendment now before the House and ask all government members who want to take a reasonable approach to this matter to also support it.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have much to add to the remarks I made yesterday, but I would like to say that the government recognizes the importance to Canada of the fishing industry. To use the words of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) yesterday, it is our feeling that actions speak louder than words. Certainly, the actions taken in the fisheries field under the aegis of the minister-designate of the environment and, incidentally, of the deputy minister-designate of the environment are an impressive recognition not only of the importance but of the need for action in the fisheries field.

There have been representations and arguments put forward that the effect of this bill will be to downgrade in one way or another the fisheries in Canada. I cannot support this thesis at all. I think that grading is a matter of approach and not, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) described it, a further example of tokenism. He described the proposed amendment as pure and simple tokenism and thought that perhaps it would be good. I think that fisheries in Canada and its problems are too serious to be dealt with by tokenism.

A case was made some time ago for an amendment to the act to provide for a man in the House of Commons who could respond as Minister of Fisheries to questions relating to fisheries. I think that in terms of communication within the House, in order to enable the question and answer period to be conducted more satisfactorily, a case can be made for appointing someone to be officially designated as Minister of Fisheries, and this amendment has been agreed to. However, when one wishes to extend this down to the deputy minister level, it might give rise to objection.

It is customary—I include in this the Department of National Revenue—to have deputy ministers presiding over a department of the same name. We will not have, as such, a Department of Fisheries and a man described as deputy minister of fisheries would be the chief executive officer of a non-existent department. We have a deputy minister of national revenue, customs and excise, and a deputy minister of national revenue, taxation. But there is no deputy minister of taxation and there is no deputy minister of customs and excise. I suggest that in terms other than purely nonsensical ones, designating a deputy minister of fisheries can only indicate that the