

*Fisheries Act*

Both levels of government look on the Fisheries Act as a useful tool. It is useful, primarily, as an act to protect our living resources in water. But it can also be used as a device to protect the fishery and our own Canadian fishermen. It governs our own fishermen wherever they go on the high seas. It follows Canadian fishing vessels. And it is used to protect our aquatic environment, not only in our largest coastal bays but in our smallest mountain streams as well.

Our own administrative arm has lots of muscle. We have fisheries officers located on both our coasts, in the Arctic and along our salmon rivers. Their main responsibility is to protect the fishery there. It is to conserve fish stocks by looking after spawning grounds, preventing the destruction of streams by bad logging practices, keeping an eye open for toxic sprays and checking on the discharge of industrial wastes.

Some hon. members will be surprised to know that we have dozens of prosecutions under the Fisheries Act. They will also be surprised to learn that we have a thousand officers in our conservation and protection service. These men are well trained. Each is a conservationist in his own right. Each is familiar with his own particular area. Each knows its commercial and recreational possibility. Each officer also knows who to contact when things go wrong as well as how to anticipate problems and head them off before they happen.

I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I failed to mention the close working relationship which these officers have with their provincial counterparts. They co-operate closely with the local fish and wildlife people. They also consult with the local foresters and, together, they take a multi-purpose approach to the management of our renewable resources there.

Please notice that I have been using the word "fish" as if fish were the only form of aquatic life. But the term fish, by definition in the Fisheries Act, also includes marine mammals like seals. It includes shellfish like oysters. It includes crustacea like shrimp. It includes minute organisms like zooplankton.

In order to complete the chain, we must also include plant life. We must also include plant life, specifically, under the Fisheries Act. We must include aquatic plants because they are very important in the natural scheme of things. Marine plants are often food for fish. However, in excessive quantities they can also be harmful to fish. In the

right amounts they can be harvested commercially. Millions of dollars worth of marine plants are already cropped annually in this country. This is another reason they should be referred to, specifically, in the Fisheries Act.

• (3:10 p.m.)

Incidentally the inclusion of marine plants will bring the Fisheries Act into line with our Fisheries Research Board Act, our Fisheries Development Act and our Fish Inspection Act. All of these important pieces of legislation recognize the ecological reality—the reality that fish life and marine vegetation are inter-related. They are part of our wider marine ecology and should be treated as such in our legislation.

Again, there is a need to control harvesting of seaweeds in the interests of orderly growth in that industry. Because the jurisdiction over the resources of the sea bottom is federal, federal legislation is needed as a basis for management. In this field of marine plants we, of course, will have to work closely with the provinces. Working closely with certain provincial government departments on both coasts we see a great new seaweed industry ahead. It is an industry which is already generating products ranging from cosmetics to clothing on the one hand, and from chocolate milk to beer on the other.

Before leaving this subject of marine plants, I would like to say a few words about algae. Algae are also marine plants. They are also living organisms. They are forms of vegetation living in waters which can be enriched in various ways. Indeed, enrichment is often the key to the proliferation of algae everywhere.

Our current problem in Lake Erie, for example, is one of over-fertilization or over enrichment. Over-fertilization or over enrichment produces algae in tremendous quantities. Mark you, algae is not always a bad thing. It may be harmful to some kinds of fish and helpful to others. In large quantities, it is generally destructive to high energy fish like trout and helpful to plant eating species like perch and carp. Incidentally, the perch industry has been flourishing in recent years in Lake Erie and the dollar value of the catch has been mounting quite steadily. I might say parenthetically also that a problem in the Far East in respect of carp stems from a lack of fertilization in the water. The lack of enrichment means a lack of algae and a lack of food for the carp. Obviously, much depends on the