

*Private Members' Business*

out of it and we would have to accept whatever the Americans wanted to do to us, which this government is prone to do.

I notice the hon. member from the other side speaking from his chair. I hope he gets up and convinces me that I am wrong and convinces the processing industry in B.C. that they are wrong when they say that this is going to lead to an export of unprocessed fish. I think the member drawing attention to me knows that for decades B.C. has had a reputation for quality fish. Our sockeye salmon, in particular, has an international reputation. A very high price is commanded for it in international markets because it is a quality product. There are reasons for that. The regulations are very stringent. These regulations are not just on paper, but they are observed because they are policed, and the industry is aware of that. It makes it more expensive to produce according to the Canadian Regulations for Quality. Everyone agrees with that. That is one reason the market is prepared to pay the higher price for a Canadian product.

If our processors are going to be denied access to the product at prices they can afford to pay, they are not going to be able to sustain the quantity of production that will enable them to financially maintain the quality of production. The argument is that if they are going to whip the ground out from under us and say we do not get the supply of fish, then we want them to relax the quality regulations so that we are down to the level of the Americans.

It is the whole idea of a level playing field in the free trade deal. Instead of bringing them up to our level in social services with people, we are supposed to go down to theirs, and this government is leading us down that road. When it comes to processing fish, instead of maintaining our reputation internationally for high quality fish, we are prepared to sacrifice our quality and compete with the Americans on their ground.

If anyone on the other side can convince me, the Fisheries Council of British Columbia, the unions involved in the fishing industry in B.C., the independent fishermen in B.C., and the shore workers, and everyone agrees on this, if one member on the other side denies it, then that member has a long way to go in persuading all of those people that they are wrong and that he is right. I

hope he is right. I fear that he will not be. Only time will tell, I suppose, although time is telling already.

The question has come up whether I do or do not believe in GATT. I said there was a GATT ruling and it went against us. We had the opportunity to appeal. That was provided for. It was this Tory government on the other side that sold us out. It did not do the appeal because it did not want to go that route. The government had no faith in GATT.

Second, there was an opportunity, even if GATT ruled against us, to pay the penalty. It would have cost us \$5 million to protect a billion dollar industry and it could have been done under GATT. I believe in GATT. It is this government across the way that does not have the faith in GATT that some of the rest of us on this side of the House do. The opportunities were there. We gave it up because this government wanted to go the free trade route and sold us out.

There was no Canadian appeal and no penalty, and the free trade deal ruled against us. I think we have lost every argument before the free trade panel since it started. The first one lost was before a fisheries free trade panel, the one dealing with the west coast. I do not know of any that we have won. The hon. member is shaking his head.

The Fisheries Council of British Columbia, as I said, is concerned about quality. In a report put out by Mike Hunter of the Fisheries Council of B.C., it states that our fish inspection regime was designed in an era when we had protectionist regulations. He is talking about the landing regulations. We simply cannot afford to have the government dictate to us what quality specifications must be.

The former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the former Minister for International Trade, and the current Minister for International Trade all reassured the workers on the west coast that jobs would not be lost. This is a direct quotation from the minister of fisheries: "will not allow jobs historically established to be threatened by any such initiative". So, they talk big, talk great, talk most reassuringly, but then give up the fight totally.

Again, the Fisheries Council of Canada has indicated that the long-term future of the processing industry in B.C. is now threatened. Given the fact that between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the costs to the processing sector are tied to the purchasing of product, there is very little room left for cost cutting. The only opportunity at all is to cut labour costs. You cannot do that through