

Coastal Fisheries Protection Act

dealing this afternoon is of a somewhat technical nature. No doubt the officials of the Department of Fisheries are watching its progress through the House.

I think it only fitting that I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to Mr. Sam Ozere, the special adviser to the Deputy Minister of Fisheries, who is retiring shortly following a most distinguished career. I am sure his counsel will be missed by his fisheries department colleagues. On behalf of the House I wish him good fishing in his retirement years.

Mr. Speaker, in Bill C-134 we have what on the surface would appear to be a very simple amendment to the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act. In his statement on second reading the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis), and again when he appeared before the Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, endorsed the explanatory note in the bill which states that the purpose of this amendment is to extend the provisions of the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act to include the service and supply vessels attached to foreign fishing fleets operating in Canadian fisheries waters.

During previous discussions on this amendment the minister also assured us there is no intention by the government to apply this amended act to our east coast ports, notably St. John's, Newfoundland, or Halifax and Sydney in Nova Scotia. According to the minister the reason for amending the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act is to enable the government to deal with a specific problem which exists on Canada's west coast, namely, the overfishing by the huge Russian and Japanese fishing fleets on the fishing grounds adjacent to British Columbia.

At the present time it is possible for supply vessels attached to these fleets to enter the port of Vancouver, for example, and leave again without in any way coming under the provisions of the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act. By this amendment to the act the minister has told us he would have the authority to exclude the supply vessels of the Russian and Japanese fleets, and the supply vessels of any other country for that matter, operating a fishing fleet off the west coast. He has also stated that the authority to restrict supply vessels as well as fishing vessels may or may not be used, but that it could serve as a bargaining lever when dealing with foreign fleets by suggesting to them that we as Canadians would allow them to use our ports

for fresh water, food and fuel if they abstained from fishing certain areas which are overfished.

Quite frankly, in view of the serious decline in our fisheries resources the objective behind the amendment, as stated by the minister, is highly desirable. Unfortunately this amendment, in our opinion, will bring about little or no improvement in respect of the problem and it may very well compound our present difficulties. In our opinion the proposed amendment is a questionable attempt by the government to strengthen the control over foreign fleets operating off our coasts.

While the minister has stated the amended act will apply only to the west coast, I would remind him that governments and fisheries ministers come and go and therefore it is difficult to say what could happen at some future time. The amendment proposed by Bill C-134 will mean that restrictions are applied to all supply and ancillary vessels accompanying foreign fishing fleets off Canada's west or east coast ports. It is therefore of concern to our major east coast ports of St. John's and Halifax whose trade with the offshore fleets runs to an estimated \$12 million in St. John's and \$3 million in Halifax and Sydney, Nova Scotia. This is a traditional trading pattern on the east coast.

● (4:40 p.m.)

Any action taken by the government to implement the provisions of this act in eastern Canada would only drive the offshore fleets into the ports of the French-owned islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. On the west coast there are apparently no such traditions, and the minister hopes that by refusing to supply the offshore fleets they will, so to speak, take their nets and go home.

The minister's attitude reminds me of the story of the ostrich which buries its head in the sand hoping that its problems will fade away. The tactic of striking at the supply ship is itself an admission that Canada agrees to the presence of these foreign fleets, that it intends to take no rational action to protect the fishing grounds off its shores but simply intends to harass these fleets and by harassment anger the nations which send them.

This tactic has been tried in other parts of the world where nations have applied economic sanctions against another country in an attempt to bring it to its knees and make it listen to reason. It has never worked. If anything, this type of tactic only strengthens the