

*Private Members' Business*

I know there are members enough for that. I do not name them because I do not operate that way. I have spoken to members on that side of the House. They understand where I am coming from. They would like to do something and I will ask those members to go to their ministers and tell them the situation, how desperate it is, and that a member of Parliament is pleading their case and is looking for compassion, benevolence, help. I will put any name to it and accept it as long as the compensation is there.

**Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand here this afternoon and be able to participate in this debate that has been initiated by my friend from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, the neighbouring constituency to mine in that part of Conception Bay where the ridings come together.

It would be trite for me to say unfortunate, but the particular situation that my friend talks about is exactly that. It is a situation that unfortunately to some extent we are all confronted with one way or the other. Those we are most familiar with have been affected the most by the decisions as he says, albeit necessary, that have had to be taken to properly manage our fisheries so that in the future we have a resource that is of value to all of the families and the communities that he talks of; not only the community of Catalina and those communities in that area, but the communities that exist all through Atlantic Canada, through Quebec and different parts of the country.

He talks about compassion and benevolence. While he seeks compassion and benevolence he would be the first to agree that he is not saying they are lacking. I do not have that many fishermen in my constituency; about 300. I see exactly the same situation that he sees.

The minister of fisheries has about 1,200 fishermen in his constituency. He has seen the fish plant in the town of Trepassey with upward of 800 people close down. He has seen a number of other smaller plants in his constituency close down.

There is not a man I have met in politics, and granted I have been associated with him for well over 17 years in politics, who has more compassion and inclination for benevolence as a personal commitment. It is the way he conducts his life.

• (1750)

As minister of fisheries it has been damn difficult for him. He is someone who we all agree has displayed a commitment to try to make it better within the constraints of the capacities of science and within the constraints of the fiscal capacity of the government.

Just last week the minister met with the fishermen and the union from the south coast in St. John's. Not completely satisfied with the results, he has dispatched his senior fisheries advisor to go to the south coast to personally do an assessment of what is happening. That reflects the type of commitment that the minister of fisheries has in dealing with these things.

He was in Grand Banks two weeks ago and met with the community. I talked to the mayor of Grand Banks 10 days ago. He was delighted with the visit. The minister has been able to save a number of fish plants except the one in his own riding, the one in Trepassey. He and I share responsibility for the city of St. John's. He has worked very hard to try and save that fish plant in St. John's.

How do you approach these things? As members in this House know, the government has taken a multi-faceted approach. We talked about dealing with the overfishing problem. We have had many debates in this House and a number of the members I see here participated with me and with other members in an effort to bring some focus to this issue and that process is ongoing.

We must clearly deal better with our capacity in science and that is something that a considerable amount of resources have been expended on. We are finally involving those people to participate in the resource so that there is a resource there that is predictable, that is definable and that we can better manage. The whole concept of underutilized species product development diversification is another that we have expanded into in which there is much more work going on in small communities in Newfoundland and Labrador to big market development and promotions through Asia and Europe, something that we all benefit from.

What does it matter if we do not have fish? It does not at all. We must act to make sure that we have fish down the road. There have been a number of communities through Atlantic Canada and into Quebec that have been affected by a lack of fish and the inability to catch fish because limits have been put in place. What happens