

Supply

of the thousands of people along the shorelines of the Atlantic area who make their living out of fishing and who, by virtue of regulations drawn up without consultation with the actual fishermen, are being put out of business, are being inconvenienced by one regulation after another emanating from the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Department of Fisheries and the Department of the Environment. For them it is an intolerable and insurmountable problem. I maintain that there must be liaison between research and the fishermen, and here I do not mean the corporate fishermen. I mean the fisherman who puts on overalls and goes out to fish by himself. This is the man who must be consulted. Mr. Chairman, do you know that when a man buys a licence to fish he does not even get a copy of the regulations so that he may know what he can and cannot do? He pays whatever the stipend may be, but is not furnished with the regulations pertaining to his occupation.

My purpose in rising to speak was to emphasize the need for attention to be paid to the fishermen by the Department of Fisheries and by the minister. I hospitably invite the Minister of Fisheries to come with me, at his earliest convenience, and take a tour along the coast of New Brunswick, particularly in the county of Charlotte, to talk to the fishermen and to see what can be done for them. There has been a great deal of discussion about the lack of opportunity for the young people of Canada, but the young people are coming to me and saying that they would like to fish with their fathers. Some of them are now old enough, are married and have children and want a licence to fish but the regulation does not permit it. This is the case with the widow, who has kept her equipment. Her sons will never fish with it under present regulations and she will never be remunerated, in spite of the fact that her husband held a salmon fishing licence in that community for a longer period of time than any of the other salmon fishermen. When the civil servant responsible for settlements was invited to visit her home and discuss the problem, he visited the community and avoided her. Mr. Speaker, this is harsh treatment for poor fishing people who need the help of the department, and the understanding of the department, to make regulations which will enable them to make a living rather than be regulated out of a living. I appeal to the minister to give these people consideration at his earliest possible convenience on the question of settlement.

• (1650)

Mr. Davis: Mr. Chairman, I should like to answer the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte, who raised several questions, as succinctly as I can. First of all, the individual case that he described today of a widow and her son who were not adequately compensated in respect of the loss of their salmon fishing privilege for the next few years is one of perhaps a dozen cases. This will make the thirteenth, submission that has been made directly to me.

We have an appeal committee in the area, and if people with legitimate complaints like this do not receive an appropriate hearing or indeed a decision that satisfies them, they can appeal, directly to me or through their local member. I will take cognizance of this particular case. If the circumstances are as described, I imagine they

[Mr. McCain.]

would be recognized as having a valid licence and either their gear would be bought out or they would receive as many as five years' payments in lieu of income. These are individual cases and each has to be dealt with on its merits. However, we have only a dozen cases of that character pending which have been appealed to me personally. There are literally hundreds of cases which have been settled to the satisfaction of the fishermen.

On the question of lobster traps, I point out that the fishermen themselves in that area have voted overwhelmingly to reduce the number. It is essentially as a result of surveys and actual consultations with the fishermen that the numbers have been reduced. If it is their wish to increase them, they will be running counter to sound economics but we will consider it.

Tens of millions of dollars have been spent on researching Atlantic salmon over the years and a great deal of work has gone into the tagging of salmon. There is now a wealth of information on how the salmon move into the ocean from the rivers. Those in the Saint John River, I understand, essentially stay in the Bay of Fundy area while these in the Restigouche and the Miramichi Rivers, the large salmon, go to waters off Greenland. The smaller salmon do not go to Greenland, even if they originate in Newfoundland rivers. We know a great deal more than I have the time to relate today.

The hon. member for Kootenay West raised several points, and I will address myself to them. He frequently says in the House that no use has been made of the Canada Water Act. This is absolute nonsense, Mr. Chairman; the Canada Water Act made possible the agreement between Canada and the United States on the Great Lakes. It gave us parliamentary approval for a structure which was negotiated with Ontario and with the United States for the clean-up over half a dozen years of the lower lakes. The Canada Water Act has been used extensively to create water management areas in Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and so on. I wish he would name the instances in which he says it has not been used. There is also the Saint John River, New Brunswick where we are proceeding to a water quality management area agreement between the federal government and that provincial government. There are other instances, Mr. Chairman. Studies are proceeding on the Okanagan Lake in the context of the Canada Water Act and so on. There is a long list of applications of the Canada Water Act, such as the case of the lower lakes agreement, proceeding all the way to the establishment of a multilevel international federal-provincial agreement setting up water quality management areas.

Mr. Harding: Would the minister permit a question? Would he tell us how many water quality management areas have been set up?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Chairman, I am simply naming three lakes for example, and interconnecting rivers from Sarnia right down to the Thousand Islands which are covered by a series of water management areas. They do not have to be spelled out in capital letters in an agreement to indicate that they are water quality management areas. The water quality targets are identified in agreements between Ottawa and the province of Ontario, and between Canada