

*Government Orders*

We will be pursuing that further, because there is an example of an official from the department who is making a clear allegation. I advised him of how serious his concerns were. We will be following up on those provisions because I think those are some of the issues that we are going to have to deal with when we are discussing Bill C-74.

The third point is actually referred to or mentioned in the release by the minister that the government is packaging this legislation as part of its response to deal with the crisis in the Atlantic fishery. Contained in the package was reference to the intention of Fisheries and Oceans to increase its surveillance and enforcement capability. DFO will increase its patrol capability by chartering additional offshore and inshore vessels.

• (1640)

Two issues are important here. The first is that there was no indication of the amount of funding which would be allocated for such an operation. Second, there is the concern on the issue of privatization.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has not just discovered the fact that it is not capable of providing the kind of coverage it is mandated to provide under the Fisheries Act. Another example is: you can have all the rules you want but if you do not have the staff or if you cut back the staff, then you are simply not going to be able to implement the rules of Parliament and very important conservation and habitat protection rules which this legislation is going to try to bring in that we will be reviewing in committee.

Another point is clause 12(1) which if passed will enable the federal government to institute a full surveillance program that would ultimately see every fishing vessel outfitted with a transponder device enabling DFO to monitor every movement of those vessels. On March 19, officials with DFO were saying that a pilot project was planned which would see up to 10 offshore vessels being outfitted with these devices. However, according to the director of Atlantic operations, before there could be any wider application of this program "there would have to be a lot of consultation with industry". The passage of Bill C-74 will turn a pilot project into a

permanent legal requirement which may have to be accommodated regardless of consultation.

I would be interested in hearing from the government on the progress that may or may not have been made in that particular area and, if we are going to be implementing something in law now that we considered earlier at one time, doing it as a pilot project before it actually becomes law.

This is one of our concerns with respect to this legislation as well. Section 35(1) of the Fisheries Act reads:

No person shall carry on any work or undertaking that results in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat.

According to the material provided by the minister, the examples cited were where fish habitat is altered as a result of road or bridge construction. No reference is made to, for example, the technology used in the conducting of the offshore fishery during the spawning season.

This is a particularly important part of this legislation. If we work on this legislation to improve it, and if there is good will on the government side and we have an indication that these laws will be followed, the Fisheries Act can and should be a vital instrument in ensuring the quality of our water and the protection of our fisheries resource, be it on the east or west coast or in any particular area where Fisheries and Oceans has jurisdiction. In my particular riding with the headwaters of the Fraser River, with three pulp mills, and with our concerns about the pollution of the Fraser River, a lot has to be done.

Our party is in general support of this legislation, Bill C-74. We think it needs some work. We will see the legislation to committee. It is our view that the committee should travel to hear the views of others on this particular point. I am referring in part to the questions of habitat protection. Also it would give all of us an opportunity, myself included, to tour Atlantic Canada and hear the fisheries concerns in that part of the country as well. We look forward to that debate in committee.

Given some of the debate that has taken place in the House today and given the concerns and attitude of the government, I move:

That this House do now adjourn.