

Supply—Fisheries

I hope the minister has the information I am about to ask for. If he has not, perhaps he could let me have it later. I know that he will give it to me. My question is this: How many applications for licences in the bay of Fundy were received this year and turned down as a result of the new policy restrictions? I know that there is a problem of the harbour as against the bay. I always found it hard to understand why we restrict salmon fishing in the bay of Fundy but not in Saint John harbour? I hasten to add that my prime concern is with the Saint John harbour. I wonder what the attitude of conservationists is about salmon stocks in these two areas? Why are they concerned with the bay, but not with the mouth of the harbour through which the salmon pass? It may be that the authority would be hard to impose in the harbour. Perhaps the minister might confirm this.

I am also interested in the bona fide fisherman as against what one might call the moonlighter. We are all interested in conservation, and I know that any serious salmon fisherman will go along with something that is being brought forward sincerely to regulate fish stocks. But I understand that the main reason for the new changes is that for a couple of years salmon fishing has been extremely good, and the department wishes to move in to this area of activity. Is this the reason? Is the cycle of salmon fishing so good that these restrictions need to be brought forward?

Having said that I suppose the minister will also wish to comment about what one might consider discrimination against certain classes of fishermen. It is important that the fisherman, whose prime occupation is fishing, should be given extra consideration when applying for a licence. Some fishermen who have fished for many years are none the less not fishermen, primarily, fishing is not their main occupation. I wonder if the minister has considered that. Without going into the regulations, and I hope the minister will correct me if I am wrong, I understand that under extenuating circumstances consideration will be given to licensees.

I also wish to know whether the figure 120, which refers to the area in which I am interested, will be maintained. In other words if one or two vacancies occur this year will the minister seek replacements next year, or will he be satisfied with a lower figure?

The other question has to do with salmon fishing. In my area we have a great salmon river. On the order paper I have a question which has not been answered yet. I do not

[Mr. Bell (St. John-Albert).]

criticize the minister, because it is necessary to compile figures. As I say, coming from the bay of Fundy we have a nice salmon river that was famous for many years for its salmon. The fish count decreased because of pollution and industrialization, and the weird habits of the salmon. The salmon count at one time went down to almost 100. Recently, though, for some strange reason—I do not know whether that reason is the dam—we have counted from 3,000 to 5,000 salmon in this river. I might add that the federal government has taken considerable interest in this waterway and it can take a great deal of pride for spending money in a worth-while project that has increased the salmon count.

• (8:40 p.m.)

The project of which we are proud was undertaken in conjunction with the Fish and Game Association of Saint John, New Brunswick. That project was the pride of anybody who went to the river to fish. Recently an altercation took place between the private company and others, and the question was asked whether the provincial government had certain privileges in the area. I limit my criticism to this, because it appears they are on the horns of a dilemma. But I understand this private company has exercised fishing privileges, or privileges on the river which give it fishing rights, and now this salmon pool which was so valuable to many in our area has been lost to the fishermen.

I say that the federal government should have protected its investment to a greater degree. I should like to know if the department was consulted in the course of the negotiations which took place between the provincial government and the company, as a result of which the company was able to obtain these valuable salmon pools. I should like to know also the terms of the contract which was entered into when we expended these large sums of money originally there. That is all I have to say. I reiterate my interest in salmon fishing and in all forms of conservation in connection with both salmon fishing and commercial fishing.

Mr. Herridge: I want to make a few brief remarks on the question of conservation generally on behalf of members of rod and gun clubs in my area, those interested in sport fishing and recreational facilities and those interested in the development of the tourist industry.

From information I have received from my constituency I judge that the provincial government takes a unilateral approach to the