

● (2.00 p.m.)

Mr. LEVELTON: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is exactly it. It is a little too early, yet, to assess the situation. There was a deadline date of May 31st, by which date applications for salmon licenses should have been made. A large portion of the native Indian population had not applied by that time and the time limit had been extended for them only. So it is a little too early yet to tell what effect this will have had.

Mr. HOWARD: Speaking of our native Indian people, there is another matter I would like to ask about, if I could and that is the Fishing Vessels Assistance Regulations which the Department of Fisheries operate, and which apply solely to the four Atlantic provinces and the province of Quebec but which do not apply to the province of British Columbia. What is happening? Are any steps being taken to extend the operation of those regulations to British Columbia?

Mr. LEVELTON: Yes, especially in view of the communication between yourself and Mr. Tremblay when he was Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, relating to the desire of native Indian people in B.C. to come under these regulations.

Mr. HOWARD: I would like to know what is happening.

Mr. ROBICHAUD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, it is not that this regulation is only applicable to the Atlantic provinces and Quebec, but we have now had meetings with the governments of Ontario, the prairie provinces and British Columbia and this regulation is applicable to those provinces who have a Fishermen Loan Board, with whom we can deal.

There is a special case to be made in the case of the native Indians and the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has been recently studying the possibility of introducing a special assistance program based on the same principle that we have on the Atlantic coast, which would be made applicable to the native Indian. We in the Department of Fisheries have offered all the assistance possible in order to determine the regulations applicable to such a program. I sincerely hope we will have something to put into effect before too long, in this regard.

Mr. CROUSE: I would like to direct this question to the Minister. On another matter, the United States Department, has announced that, in future, the United States representative at international fisheries discussions will carry the rank of ambassador. This is in view of the general upgrading of importance of United States fisheries that has followed in the wake of heavy foreign fishing off the American coast and belated recognition by policy makers in the United States that other maritime nations consider their high seas fisheries of prime importance. In the high level conferences regarding conservation and territorial rights which take place soon, or which the Minister has stated are going on constantly, full ambassadorial status gives added weight to the United States hand, and I would like to ask the Minister what steps we have taken to match this new development in fisheries negotiations.

Mr. ROBICHAUD: Mr. Chairman, I think I should ask Mr. Ozere to answer this question.