

government in the past saw fit to give out those shrimp licences and to use the policy of proximity and historical use which this government refuses to do.

There is no alternative for those communities. The only way that those communities are going to survive is if the people wanted to be moved, which they do not. They could not be moved because there are no alternatives there or elsewhere for them. But there is a possibility of making those communities work if we had the offshore quota.

That is what I want to see. Not simply penalties, but a management system which puts into place a long-term rehabilitation of that resource—not just the rehabilitation of the groundfish.

We also need some democracy in the allocation of quotas, because the allocation of groundfish quotas now in this country is a closed shop. Those people who are in there, the multinational companies who have the quotas now, have the right—as far as I can tell—to those quotas for all eternity. If one happens to be a co-operative on the coast of Labrador, there is absolutely no way to get in.

I understand that the resource has to be managed and I understand that quotas have to be kept in line. But I believe there should be some democracy built into the system whereby people who have not had access to that resource and yet people who are close to it and have historically used it should have some right of even a small quota. The quota that would satisfy the coast of Labrador would not be all that much. We are talking about something like 4,000 or 5,000 tonnes which is peanuts compared to what other large companies use. We have small plants on that coast and it would not take a great deal of fish to fill them.

Then there is the under-utilized species, the species to which my colleague from Gander—Grand Falls has referred to. Those could be allocated to those co-ops as well, and I believe that should be done.

My difficulty with this bill is not the bill itself, not the fact that there are penalties and not the fact that the penalties are going to be increased, but what the government has not done which is to bring in a sound management plan. The government has not built in some democracy to the allocation of quotas. What the government has not done is stand by its own policy of proximity and historical use in the allocation of those quotas. What the government has not done is say to aboriginal people:

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“You are equal to everybody else. You have equal access to those stocks off your shore.”

I hope that when the parliamentary secretary gets up he can address some of these points because I feel they are legitimate. We do not get cable television on the coast of Labrador so nobody sees the House of Commons. None of my people are going to hear what I am saying today. But I hope when he gets up that he addresses those problems because they are important problems. They are important problems not just to the livelihood of a resource, but to the future of people and entire communities. There is no alternative for those people and it is up to the government to come in, not simply with this bill, but a bill that addresses management, quotas, and some democracy in the allocation of those quotas.

Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, I shall try to be brief but, as I promised earlier in the week, I would on behalf of the government make a few comments on this legislation.

I am pleased, despite some of what has gone on in the last three months, that the House is supporting this piece of legislation. I think it is particularly important and it does some things that will be of significance to the fishery in the future.

It has to be recognized that the actions we have taken here in amending the Fisheries Act are just part of a larger effort about which my friend from Hillsborough made a few comments about. It is important to recognize that there has been a concerted effort on behalf of not only the government of this country, but the government of the provinces and the industry as well, to try to address some of the problems we face in the fishery.

With this piece of legislation we increase the fines and the penalties both for fisheries offences and habitat offences. We also provide for the gathering of information that will help us have better knowledge and understanding of the fisheries so we can make better and more secure decisions in the future. It takes away some of the antiquated parts of the legislation and puts in some flexibility.

It is very important to stress that the people who will come into contact with this legislation are people who commit offences against the people next to whom they work, next to whom they live, and who depend on the resource. We are talking about very few people. It is not