

inimitable fashion as persons who do not possess a university degree.

Given this welter of confusion and comic opera, I think it will be agreed that it was not unreasonable of me to ask the Minister of Transport for an early statement of the government's policy on this matter. Perhaps one can understand his temptation to treat the situation with levity, but I feel that in doing so he is hardly living up to his responsibility as Minister of Transport. Vancouver is faced by serious problems of traffic congestion which must be dealt with at once if the city is not to become choked with cars and pollution. A great many concerned citizens are worried by all this flim-flam, delay and secrecy. They have in the past suffered bitter experiences which lead them to fear that under all the apparent indecision and confusion, far reaching moves are being made in response to the demands of a relatively small number of citizens at the expense of the well-being of the entire community.

I would urge the Minister of Transport to announce clearly that if and when the city council of Vancouver reaches a firm decision on how it intends to deal with its transportation problems, the loan of \$123 million will be made available. Such an announcement would represent a great step in clarifying the situation. The people of Vancouver need to know the facts and I hope the minister will take the lead in making those facts available.

Mr. Gérard Duquet (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the government has no wish to contribute to the construction of a third crossing against the will of the people. The "commitment" to which reference has been made is an offer rather than an irreversible decision. It is hoped that full discussion will lead to the establishment of a consensus. If the local and provincial governments will make commitments reflecting such a consensus, the offer can be taken as being validated and construction may begin.

It might be added that the proposal contemplates the provision of a rapid transit corridor which can be adapted to suit any form of transit that the local municipalities may decide to establish.

FISHERIES—POSSIBLE VARIATION IN LOBSTER SEASON, DISTRICT NO. 5, NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I addressed a question to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) about his intentions with regard to making a public statement concerning a possible variation in the length of the lobster fishing season in district No. 5, Nova Scotia. With all respect, I found his answer to be evasive, glib and self-serving. It seems to me that if that is the basis upon which the minister wishes to deal with a problem which people in the area consider to be very serious, he should be asked certain questions.

The fishermen in this area are not at all happy, despite the minister's glib assurance that things were never better for the lobster fishermen. They want to know the answers to some general questions; for instance, what has happened to sick mariner's benefits, and what is the situation with respect to the fishing bounty? The bounty has gone, they know that. They know, also, that sick mariner's bene-

fits have gone and that the replacement scheme is not satisfactory. They know that subsidies to assist in the building of small vessels have been reduced, and they resent very much the encroachment of foreign fishing vessels. It seems obvious to them that the fisheries branch of the Department of the Environment, and the external affairs department are not doing what they should be doing generally.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, what vexes them is the situation regarding the so-called poll taken in district No. 5 with which I have dealt and about which I have corresponded with the minister. I think it can be summed up best by reading into the record a letter received from the Goldboro-Bayview District Board of Trade, which is a prominent and concerned organization in this area. I think this letter will prove informative and, as I say, sums up the situation very well. It reads:

Dear Mr. MacKay:

Thank you very much for your assistance in our effort to determine the status of the lobster fishing season in district No. 5, Nova Scotia. The frustrating and conflicting replies you have received from the Minister of Fisheries again confirms his lack of understanding and regard for our inshore fishery.

The 20 day reduction imposed now leaves us with a ridiculously short season of only two months from April 10 to June 10. We are now cut back to a point that when Sunday's, average bad weather and drift ice are considered actual fishing time will amount to about 42 days a year which hardly makes the other 323 days of comparative meagre existence worth the effort of maintaining expensive equipment.

We feel that our opinions are based on a sound and practical working knowledge of the situation with a backing of generations of experience. We are worthy of more consideration than that given by the minister when dealing with people who are neglected and ignored.

When asked for justification for his cruel decision the minister advised that a survey of class A fishermen showed that 85 per cent were in favour of a shorter season. When this was proven to be false he then advised that 230 fishermen were polled with 90 per cent being in favour of a shorter season. The fact that there are actually 689 class A lobster fishermen in this district and none of those contacted to date are aware of a survey makes the minister's figures and percentages even more confusing.

The minister suggests a variation order may be issued to change the dates after the season opens. This does not afford the security needed to ensure a viable industry. Action should immediately be taken to ensure the survival of our lobster fishery by the department obtaining the facts here not as dreamed at desks in Ottawa.

These are harsh words indeed, and I do not like to talk about this subject in such an acrimonious way. Had the minister answered my question in a courteous and informative manner, perhaps I would not have deemed it necessary to read this kind of letter into the public record. But I have had many such letters, Mr. Speaker. Petitions have been sent both to the minister and to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). By coincidence I received a letter today after I had asked the minister my question this morning. This particular writer suggests that the minister does not know a coho from a groundhog. I suggest, with deference and with as little offence as I can under the circumstances, that if some of the civil servants in the minister's department would go down to the district concerned, check with the fishermen and conduct straightforward polls, spend a little time with them and find out what is going on—in other words, exert a little guidance and direction instead of dictating to these