

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. HORNER—RESULT OF SOFTBALL GAME BETWEEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND PROTECTIVE STAFF

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I rise on what might be called a question of privilege to inform you and the House that the annual ball game last evening between members of parliament and members of the protective staff was won by the members of parliament by the close score of 21 to 20. Perhaps I might suggest that a pay increase for the protective staff would provide a greater incentive for them to recruit better ball players.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**AGRICULTURE**

First report of Standing Committee on Agriculture—Mr. Beer.

[*Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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FISHERIES

STATEMENT ON CANADIAN POSITION AT ANNUAL MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, I should like briefly to outline to the House the approach that Canada is taking at the 22nd annual meeting of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries when it opens in Washington today.

There are two basic thrusts: one is conservation and the other is a special preference for coastal states. The emphasis is on conservation. Most of the traditionally fished stocks in the Northwest Atlantic are either being overfished or are under heavy fishing pressure, with the result being a reduction in the supply of fish available to our inshore fishermen. This is why Canada is urging a cutback in the offshore fishing efforts by all nations and a special allocation, in Canada's favour, to improve the income of inshore fishermen in the maritime provinces, Newfoundland-Labrador and Quebec.

Our approach is based on sound, scientific principles. Each fish stock should be managed separately. Its size should be determined annually by a group of scientists who are regarded as authorities in their field. These international experts will estimate the sustainable yield for each species—a level of catch which can be taken by fishermen from the 15 nations operating in the North Atlantic and still allow the resource to return to a healthy state.

Individual quotas can then be struck for each nation. Canada, being a coastal state, will receive a special alloca-

[Mr. Speaker.]

tion. This special allocation will be included in the Canadian total in order to protect our inshore fishermen.

We are proposing that the over-all quota, or total sustainable yield of each species, be allocated as follows: 40 per cent for each nation in proportion to its latest three-year catch statistics; 40 per cent reflecting its catches in the preceding ten-year interval; 10 per cent additional to the coastal state; and 10 per cent to look after contingencies.

I could put it another way, Mr. Speaker. The estimate of over-all sustainable yield will be reduced by 10 per cent so as to be on the safe side in so far as the commission members total catching effort is concerned. A further 10 per cent will be set aside, preferentially, for the coastal states, primarily Canada. The remaining 80 per cent will be divided among all 15 nations, including Canada, on the basis of recent history.

As Canada has been responsible for half of the total ground-fish catch off our east coast, we will be allocated more than 50 per cent of the estimated sustainable yield of cod, redfish and flounders in 1973.

If we can sell this approach, this formula, this practical step toward responsible management in the Northwest Atlantic, to the other member nations of ICNAF, we will have gone a long way toward stabilizing our commercial fishery on Canada's east coast. We will have introduced order out of chaos. We will have converted the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries from an academic exercise by scientists into a fish management authority.

We will also have set an example for the rest of the world. Few international commissions have any authority over the catching effort employed by individual nations operating in international waters. Canada, by arming ICNAF in this way, will therefore be setting the stage for sound management of the living resources of the sea, something which is long overdue in the other fishing areas of the world.

A word in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, about salmon. We are adamant. Nations which look after their own rivers—rivers in which Atlantic salmon can spawn—should have the sole right to harvest these fish. Countries like Denmark whose rivers and streams produce few salmon have no right to take salmon on the high seas. Our negotiating team at ICNAF will, therefore, be calling for an immediate cessation to fishing for Atlantic salmon by other nations off West Greenland.

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, we on this side listened with interest to the statement on policy made by the minister in respect of the proposals to be put forward at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. The threat to the Atlantic salmon as a commercial species must be viewed in the over-all context of the depletion of our marine resources by overfishing, especially by the fishing fleets of foreign nations that fish off our shores, and the failure of ICNAF to respond to this situation. The sea is the world's main source of protein, and any threat to the existence of this natural food bank should be of global concern.