

*Government Organization Act*

important move by the government. The purpose of my motion, which will certainly commend itself to the House, is also to give the House an opportunity unanimously to support a resolution adopted by the Liberal party at its national convention in 1973. That resolution reads as follows:

That in view of the increasing importance of the fisheries to the people of Canada, particularly to the people of the coastal provinces, that there be re-established immediately, a department to take charge of this area to be known as the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources.

In further support of my resolution, I place on the record of the House another important resolution passed by Liberal candidates of the Atlantic provinces who met in Halifax during the 1974 federal election campaign. That resolution was incorporated into the Liberal platform and called for the establishment of a separate Department of Fisheries.

During the election campaign in 1974, in a speech in Digby, Nova Scotia, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) did not go as far as the Liberal candidates: he merely indicated that in view of the importance of fisheries to coastal provinces he was prepared to appoint a full-time minister to look after fisheries programs. I quote the Prime Minister because I understand how important it is here. That part of the Liberal program was implemented following the election of 1974 with the appointment of a Minister of State for Fisheries. That was better than nothing; at least we had a minister who was able to devote his full time and attention to the very serious problem of the fishing industry on both coasts and in the inland waters.

The problem has been seriously exacerbated by the most recent cabinet shuffle. During that reorganization of government we lost the full-time Minister of Fisheries and are now back to the situation that prompted the resolution of the Liberal convention in 1973 and the Liberal Atlantic provinces candidates' resolution of 1974; we are back to having very important questions relating to fisheries and the implementation of the 200-mile limit and the organization that is going to be necessary in relation to that important event: we now have a minister who has to devote a great deal of time to things other than fisheries. We now have a Minister of Fisheries having responsibility, once again, for the environment, notwithstanding the fact that the Fisheries Service of the Department of the Environment occupies a great deal of the minister's time, and rightly so.

In addition, it accounts for almost 50 per cent of the total budget of the Department of the Environment. Not only do we not have a separate Minister of Fisheries at this most important time in the evolution of the fisheries industry, but we do not even have a deputy minister of fisheries. The Department of the Environment is organized so that one deputy minister presides over two senior assistant deputy ministers. We have in the fisheries section of the Department of the Environment a senior assistant deputy minister who answers to the Minister of the Environment, and he has under him two assistant deputy ministers.

Ever since the government's reorganization bill of 1971 very serious problems have been created for the men and women who have the responsibility of administering Canada's fisheries

program. It has resulted in a very serious undermining of the morale of the fisheries service and the highly qualified and dedicated people who carry out our fisheries programs. Their efforts have been thwarted by the government and, as a result, morale is at an all-time low.

If that were not enough, we now have the situation whereby the implementation of the 200-mile limit will require considerable additional resources which the Department of the Environment does not have at the present time. Just a few days ago Treasury Board turned down a request by the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc) for additional personnel to administer the 200-mile limit. I understand that the Minister required 100 additional personnel just for the east coast alone, mostly within my own province. That was reduced to a nominal number. It is regrettable because these officers are going to be overtaxed at a time when morale is low, at a time when the budget has been very seriously restrained, and at a time when we need more than ever a full-time Department of Fisheries presided over by a full-time minister of fisheries.

I suppose a certain amount of credit has to be given to the present minister who has to carry the burden of both offices and the burden of looking after Canadian fishing interests while at the same time giving attention to the very important environmental problems facing the country today. My colleague, the hon. member for Perth-Wilmot (Mr. Jarvis), has put these problems forward on many occasions. I am sure he would support my motion because it would be in the interests not only of the fishing industry of Canada to have a separate Department of Fisheries but it certainly would be in the best interests of the environmentalists and those tackling the ecological problems of our society to have a Department of the Environment dealing with the problems of clean air, clean water and all the attendant problems of a highly industrialized state.

I believe it is essential to have a separate Department of the Environment, but I believe it is even more essential to have a separate Department of Fisheries. As a result of the belated action of the government, and after a long period of gestation and consideration to implement a 200 mile limit, the Fisheries Service in Canada is going to be called upon to perform very important tasks in relation to the management of this vast zone now within our jurisdiction. The management of resources, required surveillance, scientific research, conservation of existing stocks and methods of returning depleted stocks to the point where they can again be economically viable are all serious questions.

• (1710)

The motion we are considering has been on the order paper ever since the government reorganization bill of 1971 was first introduced. It has been brought forward year after year. I believe it commends itself to the House; I believe it commended itself to the Liberal party when it met in convention in Ottawa in 1973, and commended itself to Liberal candidates who met in caucus in Halifax in 1974. I commend it to this House for favourable consideration.