

and that is why I moved a motion last Monday that we have a unanimous vote by members of the House to indicate that the new parliament of Canada does not like the idea of this tanker route along the west coast of British Columbia. It is obvious that members of the opposition cannot get this motion through the House. I suggest to the minister that he can introduce such a motion. We will support it, and I am quite sure that he will obtain the unanimous support of all other parties here because we are all interested in trying to stop this tanker route along the west coast of British Columbia.

I will close on that note, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for allowing me this additional time.

• (1640)

Mr. McCain: Mr. Chairman, it is not my intention to take up much of the time of the committee, but the first thing I wish to say pertaining to this debate on fisheries and environment is that it is very obvious that questions of the environment are uppermost in the minds of Canadians and of hon. members. This makes it extremely difficult for those engaged in commercial fishing to get their points of view before the House. It seems to me that the Department of Fisheries should have its own minister. Through no fault of the present minister, or of the policy initially intended, it is quite obvious that there is conflict between the two departments of Environment and Fisheries, inasmuch as the emphasis upon one puts the other almost into virtual oblivion.

The problem in the area which I represent, and in neighbouring areas, is one of very serious consequence to those who make their living from the sea. I grant that there are environmental problems involved. It is most unfortunate that some of the employment opportunities created by government emergency programs have not been directed to the correction of some of the environmental problems, because the cost of correcting these problems is beyond the financial means of the local communities and areas.

Fishing is restricted because of environmental problems in my area. This is something to which the government should give serious consideration. The most pressing question arises out of the restrictions placed on the taking of certain species of fish in the New Brunswick area, particularly the taking of salmon. Not only have fishermen been forced to abandon their fishing operations but they have encountered many problems in arriving at the final settlements to which they feel entitled. I would like to ask the minister if he would advise the House, preferably today, what the terms and conditions of the final settlements will be. The salmon fishermen understood that if they submitted an estimate of their income for a certain period of time they would forthwith receive cheques for half of the amounts they estimated. In general this has been done. However, it has been extremely difficult for the salmon fishermen to prevail on the responsible authorities and make them understand that the estimates they submitted as income were, in fact, their income. They are being asked to settle for less than they feel is just.

In the terms of settlement, I believe there must be a certain element of estimate allowed to the fishermen.

Supply

Since the earliest days of the industry, it has been habitual that people in the surrounding area buy some fish directly from the fishermen, and the balance of the catch is sold to the commercial trade. It is with respect to this local sales income that the fishermen are experiencing difficulty in receiving a fair sum on an annual basis. When it was agreed that there would be a settlement arrived at on the basis of income, regulations had to be laid down. That is understandable, but these regulations have created many hardships. I give one example. The father of a family passed away. The mother and sons retained all the fishing equipment which the father had owned, in anticipation of the day when one of the sons would be old enough to take up lobster fishing. Now, that equipment is aging and neither the eldest son nor the mother can get a licence to fish for salmon or lobster. Further, they are not entitled to compensation because for one year the father's licence was allowed to lapse. This is a serious hardship for them.

Now, I wish to mention the Kouchibouguac National Park on the east coast of New Brunswick. Here again there is a conflict. People are being told that they will be remunerated for giving up their fishing business on the basis of its value to them over the years. Does this mean that they will receive income comparable with their income from fishing? Does it mean they will be established as individuals in fishing somewhere else? If a man lives in the neighbourhood of the park and sells his salmon fishing privileges will he have an opportunity to take the five year settlement on an annual basis? The people concerned are confused. They anticipated that by the latest on Christmas Day they would receive cheques in lieu of their income from salmon fishing. This would have been as a final settlement. They have not received those cheques yet. The fishermen are deeply concerned.

Then, there is the question of building new wharves and repairing old ones. It is difficult, if not impossible, to get three departments of government to give approval. First, the Department of Fisheries has to estimate the income involved and determine the viability. Then, the Department of Transport has to appraise the proposal from its point of view. Finally, the Department of Public Works comes in to the picture. As I say, it is extremely difficult to get all three departments to agree that a particular wharf should be built or repaired. The obstacles to fishing, and to convenience in fishing, are immense and almost insurmountable.

One of the questions frequently asked is this: is there statistical evidence that additional lobster traps in the area where lobster fishing prevails would, in fact, deplete the resource? Is that information available? Are the salmon which are tagged in their ocean habitat returning to New Brunswick, to the east coast of New Brunswick, to Nova Scotia, to Newfoundland, or are they going elsewhere? Have we in fact, identified the ocean habitat of Atlantic salmon, or have we just identified the habitat of salmon, meaning salmon that may come from somewhere else? There are questions that must be studied and answered.

I understand the desire of the House to make progress with these estimates, so I will not take up any more time. But, Mr. Chairman, let us not underestimate the interest