

*Fisheries Act*

perhaps the sports fishermen will have caught all the fish, and as the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans says he is going to abide by the U.S. agreement, the season might have to be closed.

I would like to take some exception to the remarks made not only by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans a few moments ago, but to the remarks made by the official critic of the New Democratic Party. Perhaps this is an appropriate time to do so since it appears that we are reaching an agreement behind the curtains.

First, the official critic of the NDP was talking about the moorage fees, as he called them. I believe the Minister of Fisheries called them berthage fees. Fishermen call them wharfage fees. There is quite a difference. A berth is an area where you usually fish, or an area that you have reserved for purposes relating to the fishery. Moorage could be out in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Wharfage is when you are tied up to a wharf, either directly or indirectly. In other words, a boat could be tied up to another boat which is tied up to a wharf or to several boats which are tied to the wharf, or a boat could be tied to the wharf itself. I just wanted to clarify the terminology. We are actually talking about wharfage, not moorage, as the NDP says, or berthage, as the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said.

● (1200)

When the official critic of the NDP spoke a few moments ago, he said that the doubling of moorage fees or wharfage fees, which is actually what he was talking about, was unfair because in certain provinces no fees were paid, and that this came to light last night in the standing committee. He is correct that it came to light last night in the standing committee, but I have to take exception to the reasoning. I do not believe there should be any wharfage fees at all. Perhaps that is what he should modify his position to be. There should not be any wharfage fees across the country. I understand what he is talking about. He is angry because fishermen in British Columbia have to pay to have their boats tied up. For the life of me I cannot understand why fishermen in B.C. ever put up with it in the beginning. We heard evidence which indicated that a fisherman had to pay \$60 a month to tie up his boat, and it was not even tied up to the wharf. It was his home port. The fees will now become \$120 per month for him to have the right to tie up his boat to a wharf. I do not understand the fishermen in British Columbia or the unions representing them, I do not understand how it was put into place in the beginning.

I take exception to the Minister saying that he is looking into the question of the fishing vessel insurance scheme. He has said to several people, I believe behind the scenes, that he will make sure no fisherman will be in a situation where he cannot get any insurance at all. That was the general tone of the Minister's remarks. The fact of the matter is that any fisherman can obtain private insurance on his boat. There is no doubt about that, but the problem is how much he will have to pay for it. The leakiest boat in Canada, the oldest boat in

Canada with a rotten bottom, could be insured, but how much will the premiums be? That is the problem. When the notice went out to fishermen that the fishing vessel insurance scheme would be cancelled, that is the government-sponsored scheme, they had to look ahead. March 31 is coming and many of them will have to renew their insurance. They will go to private insurance companies and will have to pay perhaps three times the premiums they paid last year. In some cases, for large boats it will amount to \$20,000 or \$30,000. The Minister's argument has to be one way or the other, either he will cancel the scheme or he will not.

I should like to give the Minister a word of advice. He cannot cancel the fishing vessel insurance plan which was instituted for a particular purpose. It is serving its purpose well. The Government says that it will save money by doing away with the scheme. It should look at the facts, at the balance sheet which shows a \$5 million profit in the scheme since it was instituted in the early 1950s. Where is the saving? Yes, the Government will save in salaries, because everyone who works with that particular Department will be laid off, but it will not be gaining in the long run. Yes, the scheme lost money last year and the year before, but as witnesses from British Columbia pointed out to the committee last night, over a period of time it does not lose money on the scheme. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans should announce immediately that the ill-advised policy inflicted upon him by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) will be reversed and the fishing vessel insurance scheme will be reactivated. He should tell the fishermen of Canada that they need not worry, that they will not have to pay two or three times the amount they paid last year for insurance.

I have heard certain Hon. Members point out that fishermen can obtain insurance at the same rate and sometimes even at a lower rate. Those fishermen are free to do so. There is no argument there. If they can obtain just as good a deal from a private insurance company, they would be crazy to stay under the federal scheme. Let them get the better insurance. However, the fishing vessel insurance scheme was put in place for people who could not afford the insurance schemes of private companies. It was put in place so that there would be a fast turnover of money in case of accident. It was put in place for many boats in northern areas of the country, in far-flung areas. It was extremely difficult for those owners to obtain insurance from private firms because the boats would have to be inspected up north in small communities. The Minister should announce the immediate cancellation of that policy statement of the President of the Treasury Board.

The motion before the House today moved by the NDP deals with the authority of the Minister. Of course, matters such as the fishing vessel insurance scheme and wharfage fees being imposed and doubled across the country were mentioned in this debate as they relate to the authority of the Minister. We should not forget that other things were done under the authority of the Minister since the Government came into power which were really not good at all. I refer to the outrageous cost of charts to fishermen. This was imposed by