

suppliers to the railways, would also have to establish their expertise and reliability, as well as their ability to compete.

[English]

FISHERIES—ATLANTIC SALMON STOCK—PREVENTION OF
POACHING

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to continue with a question I posed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané) concerning the enforcement of the Atlantic salmon management plan which the Minister announced a short time ago in this House. The concern I am expressing is related to the management and enforcement of the plan throughout the regions it affects. I want to refer specifically to the New Brunswick region.

● (1820)

As you may know, Mr. Speaker, the announcement of the management plan does include a substantial curtailment of the salmon activities with reference to both commercial and recreational fishery within the Province of New Brunswick. Both of those fisheries are extremely supportive of any efforts on the part of the Government to manage the fishery in a responsible way. However, the fact of the matter is that there has been little or no funding made available to increase the enforcement of the salmon management plan. This is indeed of tremendous concern.

In the Atlantic region, Mr. Speaker, and particularly in New Brunswick and other areas, a large portion of the income of many individuals is dependent upon the salmon management from both the commercial and recreational fishery. It is extremely critical that these people are assured that the sacrifices which they are being asked to make by the Department of Fisheries and the Minister responsible for Fisheries will not be for nought. Indeed, the black market in salmon has flourished in Atlantic Canada for a good number of years because of declining stocks of salmonoid. This has been of tremendous concern to conservationists and the Department of Fisheries over the last number of months certainly, just by virtue of the program which the Minister has come out with.

I was extremely disappointed that the Minister did not suggest that there should be additional funding in the reinforcement areas of the law with reference to management of the program. As I mentioned before, salmon has always been a product which has been a boon to the black market in our region. We would like to see that these people are managed handsomely.

The people who live along many rivers in New Brunswick are affected very much by the Minister's announcement. Among these rivers are the Hammond, the Restigouche, the Miramichi, the Upsalquitch, the Nupisiquit, the Dungarvan, the Cannes, the Nauwigewauk, the Belisle, the Kennebecasis, the Washademoak, the Salmon and, of course, that king river, the Saint John River. There are many outfitters who are extremely concerned by the decision that has been brought down. There are many commercial fishermen who are concerned about the loss of livelihood they are going to experience

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because this decision has been taken. There are scores of sports fishermen who are extremely concerned about the restrictions that are being forced upon them by the Government. It is not that they are not prepared to co-operate in a conservation program. It is also certainly not that I am not prepared to co-operate; nor is it that the Government is not prepared to co-operate. We recognize that salmon is an endangered species which should be protected.

However, all elements of society, including the commercial, sports, and native fishermen should be conscientious enough to participate in a meaningful and willing way in the conservation program. The native fishermen take a tremendous amount of fish and have been entitled to them since confederation. I think it is incumbent upon the Government to ensure that enforcement does become a very meaningful part of the program and that the sacrifices which these other people are being asked to make on behalf of the conservation program as put forth by the Government will not be solely for the exploitation or benefit of the black market which does exist in the salmon fishery.

● (1825)

When we talk about the salmon fishery in New Brunswick; the Atlantic area, and in Newfoundland where it is extremely substantial to the living of thousands of fishermen, we talk of an issue about which we should be terribly conscientious as legislators. We should ensure that the sacrifices we are being asked to make as Atlantic Canadians will not be thwarted by an illicit, illegitimate market that could develop. Certainly, the only way to monitor that situation and ensure that that does not take place is for the Government to recognize its responsibility for funding, to ensure that the program is adequately monitored and policed so that those who care to take the chance of violation are brought to the forefront of the law.

[Translation]

Mrs. Éva Côté (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Hon. Member's question, I want to say, first of all, that protecting the salmon is a very difficult and expensive task, since there are thousands of miles of distant waterways where salmon is easy to fish, and also because this is a very vulnerable fish. I shall refer, if I may, to the findings of the Task Force chaired by Dr. Barry Muir. Its report has been submitted to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Scott Parsons, and has been distributed to all members of the Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon and was made available to the parties concerned, Members of Parliament and members of the press. The report stressed two undeniable facts: first, that stocks of Atlantic salmon, as my hon. friend mentioned earlier, are declining seriously, and second, that draconian measures must be taken immediately if we are to ensure the stable survival of this species. The 1984 Atlantic Salmon Management Plan, announced on April 6 of this year, was prepared as part of the requirement for serious conservation measures.