

Government Orders

I do not really understand why he would want to speak in view of the fact that members of this party and, I believe, members of the New Democratic Party support the bill.

Perhaps to expedite matters, Madam Speaker, you might want to see the clock extended to approximately 6.10. Thereafter, we could terminate debate and there would be no necessity for us to proceed with any kind of a vote. I think it would pass unanimously.

Mr. Gardiner: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, my party will agree to that, on the condition that it is not approximate, but that it is exactly at 6.10.

Mr. Reid: Madam Speaker, if I may comment, the reason that I will speak on this debate is because I made a commitment to my colleagues that I would speak on this debate. I intend to keep my word in the arrangements that I make in the House.

Second, I will agree that at 6.10 we will have that vote if my hon. friend from Labrador speaks no more than 10 minutes.

• (1750)

Madam Deputy Speaker: This puts the Chair in a difficult situation. I do not think "yes, if—" is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent for the Chair not to see the clock until 6.10 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: Precisely.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Precisely.

Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Madam Speaker, I certainly cannot match the eloquence of my colleague for Gander—Grand Falls. I wish he had not left the Chamber, because I want to say that we have seen an example of something close to the ideal member of Parliament, that is one who is very knowledgeable. There is nobody either in this House or outside who is more knowledgeable than the member for Gander—Grand Falls, a member who has a commitment and a concern.

As I only have 10 minutes, and because the parliamentary secretary is going to speak after I do, perhaps I could simply lay out for him the difficulties that I have, and he can address those difficulties when he speaks.

The difficulty I have is not with the bill itself and not with the increase in penalties. An increase in penalties is fine for those who are breaking the law. There are people breaking the law. There are people who are raping a resource off our shore that is the sole means of livelihood of the people that I represent on the Labrador coast.

The bill does not go far enough. The problem is what is not in the bill. This is a band-aid to stop the haemorrhaging of not only a fishery, but a way of life. There are communities on the coast of Labrador whose sole means of support is the fishery and whose inshore fishery has gone down steadily year after year. The proof of that is the kind of response that the government has had to make. The emergency response is in answer to a failure in the inshore fishery and the fact that inshore fishermen and plant workers have not been able to qualify for unemployment insurance—not just one year, but year after year.

Some of those people on my coast have not been able to get even the minimum qualifying period under emergency response. There are 100 people on a list in my office now who still do not qualify for the emergency response. Nobody wants emergency response. Nobody wants to qualify because nobody wants the program in the first place. What they want is some way of making a living. That is the difficulty.

If the inshore fishery has failed—and it has year after year—where will you get the wherewithal to fill those plants to give the fishermen and the plant workers work? Where? The only answer is in the offshore. Yet, the government has refused consistently to give Labrador an offshore quota. Here is a people who are closest to the best resource that we have. The northern cod is the richest, most lucrative, resource that we have off the shores of Labrador. Yet the government has denied the fishermen of Labrador a quota of offshore cod, in spite of the fact that the government policy lists proximity and historic use as fundamental to qualifying for an offshore quota.

These people whom I am talking about are, to a degree, aboriginal. In past years, through giving them an access to an offshore shrimp quota, for example, we have been able to create two co-operatives on that coast. Where the private sector has never gone or worked, we have created two native co-operatives, one in northern Labrador and one in southern Labrador, in which aboriginal people and others are making a go of their plants. A