

The fishing industry of Newfoundland, indeed of eastern Canada, is facing a very severe crisis. Yesterday we had the privilege of listening to an official from the Newfoundland Fish Trade Council who was appearing before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and presenting a report both alarming and frightening, especially to those of us who realize the importance of the fishing industry to this part of Canada. In fact, the fishing industry is in very serious danger of becoming depleted to the point where it will become uneconomic and it will not be a feasible proposition to engage in the industry.

With a full-time minister in the present department a number of blunders have been made that have reflected on the fishermen of eastern Canada; and I am wondering what will happen when the affairs of the fishing industry are administered just by an assistant deputy minister who at the same time will have other responsibilities. I fear that the importance of the industry will be pushed into the background to such an extent that it will be only a matter of time before the fishing industry will not have too much say in government.

It is for this reason that I support the amendment moved by my colleague. I repeat that the fishing industry is important to Canada, especially to eastern Canada, and we are concerned that a deputy minister of fisheries be appointed to look after the affairs of the industry.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) pointed out, we endorse the principal point of the amendment and indeed tried to do the same thing during committee stage last evening. I think it should be realized that to those members interested in fisheries matters, the question of giving some emphasis to fisheries is just as important as grain growing is to members who come from the Prairies, and their interests should be given equal consideration and legislative reflection.

• (3:40 p.m.)

We are going to move the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) to the new position of Minister of the Environment. In considering that move I do not think any of us can escape flavouring our views with consideration of the actions of the person who now holds the office of Minister of Fisheries and Forestry. I for one, along with many fishermen, have very grave doubts about the true concerns of the minister. We have grave doubts about the ability of the minister because he has certain blind spots in his make-up which prevent him from properly dealing with fisheries problems as they arise from time to time. The experience we have gained since he has been minister lead us to doubt whether he will be able to represent the interests of fisheries and fishermen in the years to come, particularly when we realize that this obligation on the part of the minister is to become secondary to his obligations as Minister of the Environment.

The minister has left the impression of having a high degree of arrogance in his make-up. He tends to be dictatorial in his position, rather than democratic. He tends to give the impression of not caring too much about

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the effects of the policy he advocates on individual fishermen and communities. He has tried to substitute propaganda and press releases for action itself.

In the Prince Rupert *Daily News* of May 17 there is a reproduction of parts of a letter the minister sent to the diocesan Bishop of Caledonia, the Reverend Hambidge of Prince Rupert, who had written the minister expressing concern about the institution by the department of a program in Prince Rupert, and in a number of small communities around there, briefly referred to as the "Licence limitations program in the salmon fisheries". Reverend Bishop Hambidge in his letter condemned the minister's plans for overhauling the fishing industry as one which would ruin the small fisherman and benefit big business. We must remember that Bishop Hambidge was relating his remarks to his concern for people who live their lives in the fishing industry and provide for their families as a result of the industry. Part of the minister's response was as follows:

Apparently you are ignorant of many of the facts involved in this case.

Then he stated, as quoted in the article:

As it is, it is so full of inaccuracies and rumours that I am tempted to ignore it entirely. I cannot do this because it contains several untruths.

The minister then proceeded in a rather arrogant way to lecture the bishop on the content of his letter. All the bishop did was reflect the concern individual fishermen have about the effect of this proposed licensing limitation program. If this were an isolated incident, perhaps one could overlook it; one might think that in the spirit of the moment and out of frustration the bishop dashed off such a letter without consideration. This is not the only letter that has been sent to the minister.

On April 7 the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative Association wrote the minister a 2½-page letter pleading with him to engage in what they classified as a "sociological study to complement the economic studies made by Professor Sinclair some years ago into a licence limitation program." This letter complained about the licence limitation program in respect of both the manner which was used to attempt to put it into effect and the consequences of such a program.

Again the minister, under the date April 27 in his reply to the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative Association, by extracting quotations out of context and in distortion of the over-all point of view said that the Fishermen's Co-operative Association in its differences was simply trying to refer the minister to the concern of fishermen about the licence limitation program. The minister said in his letter that he believed in measures of forward-planning and that the association did not. That is arrogance to the nth degree. It is presumptuous on the part of the minister. It manifests the minister's lack of knowledge of the progress of the fisheries co-operative movement, particularly in the area of Prince Rupert. This is the sort of attitude that engineers will adopt in respect of a specific problem without regard to the co-operative effort these associations play in forward-planning for the future generation and mankind itself.