

Commercial Fisheries Development

When my good friend the Minister of Fisheries claims there is no longer a Minister of Game and Fish in Quebec, my honourable friend knows quite well that Hon. G. D. Levesque is still there, and is particularly involved in questions of fish and game. To my knowledge, he has not yet asked the Canadian Minister of Fisheries if the latter was ready to agree to a joint program.

Mr. Chairman, this is to say that Bill C-145 is quite untimely in the circumstances. It is not even, as the hon. member for a British Columbia riding said a moment ago, suitable to conditions in British Columbia. It may be suitable to New Brunswick, though I am not sure; but one thing is certain, the bill on fisheries is not suitable to present needs in the province of Quebec.

The minister knows the Gaspé Peninsula as well as I do. We have fishermen there, professional fishermen who have been fishing for years and, even today, face an alarming problem, not as far as learning to fish is concerned but how to put fish products on the market.

The minister offers no solution in Bill C-145. He says that he is ready to study everything concerning fishermen in general. But, he offers no solution at all.

Will fishermen be better off after the passing of this bill? The minister can answer: yes, definitely.

The minister has been looking after fisheries for the past three years. Has the lot of the Canadian fishermen improved since he took over this department? I see the minister shaking his head meaning yes and no. He knows that conditions of Canadian fishermen have not improved and will not be improved under Bill C-145.

I do not intend to prolong the debate. The bill introduced by the minister contains no solution to help the Canadian fishermen of his constituency.

The minister tells us: We are going to co-operate with the universities, the students, the provincial government. Why not with the Ladies of St. Anne and the Children of Mary, in order to try and find a solution? He knows well that his bill is not the answer. We need something else besides that, we need a market so that our fishermen might sell their products; we need domestic and international markets.

Then, our fishermen will be able to establish a distinction between categories (a), (b), (c) or (d) in their fish production. The minister knows that the fishermen do not need a

lawyer, a notary or the minister to tell them how to fish. However, they need a market so that they may dispose of their products in order to live decently. That is what the fishermen need all across Canada.

An hon. Member: He should know.

Mr. Caouette: Certainly, he should know.

● (8:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, when the minister introduced the bill on second reading he used words to the effect that there was not very much new contained in the bill, but that it merely consolidated in statute form those things which had previously been done by appropriation or by specific items in the estimates; that it combined and put into one law where all could see the procedures and systems which would be a guide for the future.

However, there is one new venture in a sense, and that has to do with giving to the Department of Fisheries some determination as to cold storage facilities. I want to extend my congratulations to the minister for finally taking the lead that those of us in the C.C.F. propounded during the time the Conservatives were in office.

Mr. Caouette: You have changed now.

Mr. Howard: My hon. friend from Villeneuve says we have changed. We changed the name, but we did not do so in a situation which was as terrible as when he changed.

Mr. Caouette: What about the Social Credit party?

Mr. Howard: My hon. friend wants to talk about Social Credit. I will take him up on that in a moment and tell him something about what happened in my own province under Social Credit.

Mr. Caouette: That is a different matter.

Mr. Howard: My hon. friend says that is a different matter. Mr. Chairman, would you like to protect me a little from the hon. member for Villeneuve?

The Chairman: Order, please. May I remind the hon. member for Skeena and the hon. member for Villeneuve that we have before us clause 2 of the bill.

Mr. Howard: I was proceeding to that clause, Mr. Chairman, pointing out that during the time the Conservatives were in office