

Fisheries Act

his recommendations will be brought to the attention of the minister and considered when this new bill of which I spoke at one o'clock comes up in the fall.

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Clause agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

• (2:30 p.m.)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): When shall the said bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Davis (for Mr. Jamieson) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

FISHERIES ACT**AMENDMENTS RESPECTING "CLOSE TIME" DEPOSITING OF WASTE, MARINE PLANTS, ETC.**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-204, to amend the Fisheries Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova) moved:

That Bill C-204, an act to amend the Fisheries Act, be amended by deleting clause 2 thereof, line 14, page 1.

He said: Mr. Speaker, finally we are down to the Fisheries Act and I had to leave at three o'clock this morning to come here to speak to this amendment. The amendment calls for the deletion of a clause, which simply provides for the repeal of section 31 of the Act. It looks very simple, and in fact for quite a while no one paid too much attention to this clause. All of a sudden, the question flared up and we now find ourselves in quite a situation in the sense that the fishermen of Nova Scotia, particularly those in my riding, are about 95 per cent opposed to this provision. I also understand the fishermen in New Brunswick are opposed to the repeal of this section.

Although this clause is the shortest in the whole bill, to the lobster fishermen of the Atlantic provinces it means a lot. If the bill passes with this clause unamended, according to my understanding the minister will have the right to enact legislation to permit the harvesting of off-shore lobsters on a yearly

[Mr. Loislle.]

basis, and the fishermen are concerned about this. The only information we have had on this subject since the bill was introduced last April was given by the deputy minister of fisheries under questioning in the standing committee. Information from the department has certainly been lacking, which perhaps is one reason the fishermen are upset about it. They do not understand what it means. They have had one interpretation, but they think they are right and that the minister will not go along with their views.

Only two weeks ago a report on the subject issued by the Fisheries Research Board was made available to me and to the fishermen. I questioned Dr. Martin on the subject in the committee last April and was told that the offshore lobster fishery was a separate resource from the inshore lobster fishery. Under further questioning, he told me there was no danger to the lobster inshore fishery markets even if offshore lobsters were harvested.

One wonders why this very simple provision to which I referred was included in the bill. According to a press report, not very long ago the department stated that no company or organization brought any pressure to bear in support of this proposal. The only reason given by the department was that this resource was being tapped by the vessels of two nations, the United States and Russia, which were fishing on the banks, and since they were engaging in this type of fishing, Canada should do the same.

As it happens, those two nations fish for lobsters only on the banks and do not come close to Canadian shores. However, I am wondering what would happen if Canadian lobster boats were permitted to fish offshore for lobsters, and how we would prevent these boats from getting close to the banks just outside the 12-mile limit. Why would these boats be permitted to trap or to drag—I understand that dragging is pretty well out of the question, but they could trap—just outside the 12-mile limit where our inshore fishermen are engaged in fishing?

Just because the Russians and the Americans do this sort of thing is no reason why we should do the same. Can Canada benefit only by grabbing all she can, like other nations? Is this what we mean by conservation of the fisheries? This is something the minister is quite concerned about, and is this what he means by conservation? The fishermen contend that this sort of activity will eventually destroy the inshore lobster fishery