

longer covered by the Unemployment Insurance Act. Will they be covered with this new definition of fish as presented under the Fisheries Act? The obvious answer to that is no. The judge, or the Department of National Revenue in making that determination would only go by the regulations in the Unemployment Insurance Act. The need is there for the Minister of Fisheries on behalf of all of these fishermen—

● (1200)

Mr. Dick: Fisherpersons.

Mr. Baker:—fisherpersons who will in the future get into trouble with the Unemployment Insurance Commission because of the actions of this Government, to try to co-ordinate these definitions to lessen the chances of a man having to pay back \$5,000, \$6,000 or \$7,000 as it is now.

There are hundreds and hundreds of fishermen across Canada who have to pay back this money because of a problem with definitions. In one section of Newfoundland 278 fishermen are having to pay back \$7,000 or \$8,000. They are appealing the decision. But why did that situation occur? It happened because of a problem with definitions, the problem that we are dealing with here today. It happened because it is the policy of the Government of Canada to remove all those people who should not be getting unemployment insurance. What they did when they threw out the net is they cut people off because of the problem with definitions. They had to draw the line in regulations. They asked, "Was this a fish that the person caught? Does this cover portions of fish? No, it does not cover portions of fish". The Fisheries Act with this amendment covers portions of fish. Why does the Unemployment Insurance Act or its regulations not cover portions of fish?

In the spirit of this amendment, and in dealing with this clause, the Minister of Fisheries with the rest of his Cabinet colleagues should examine and change the regulations in the Unemployment Insurance Act so we will not have thousands and thousands of Canadians being judged not eligible for unemployment insurance after having received it for three and four years, and having to pay back thousands and thousands of dollars because of a problem with definitions. These are poor people, people with average incomes of \$7,000 or \$8,000 a year. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, with this new clause in the Fisheries Act there can be some co-ordination of Unemployment Insurance and Fisheries Act regulations in order to have matching definitions.

Before I sit down if the Minister is going to say a few words, I want to make sure that he has in his statement the answer to a very important question. Is the Minister or is he not going to answer positively the request from the Fishermen's Union and every fisherman in Newfoundland and on the Quebec coast, including those in the Prime Minister's (Mr. Mulroney) own riding, to extend unemployment insurance because of the ice conditions?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill, as all Members know, is to give the Minister and the Department the authority neces-

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sary to manage the fisheries of Canada, especially in view of court cases last summer which put this authority in doubt.

I want to remind Hon. Members and the public, and especially friends on the West Coast, that this Bill was tabled on March 4, 1985. On March 6 second reading debate began. On March 12 at my invitation and with the concurrence of the Government House Leader the debate was adjourned.

On March 14 from 9:30 a.m. to one o'clock in the afternoon I appeared before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry as a consequence of that arrangement—an unusual procedure. On March 20, second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry was agreed to in this House. On March 21 the committee review began with sessions with officials from my department. From March 24 to April 3 the committee, with my full endorsement and support, held seven days of hearings on the West Coast, during which time the subject of this Bill formed part of the representations heard at that time.

From March 26 to April 2, the Hon. senate conducted a pre-study of the Bill in the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry.

On April 22, the House of Commons Standing Committee heard testimony from representatives of seven industry groups and from the West Coast Minister's advisory committee. On April 24, I appeared before the Standing Committee again. On April 29, the Standing Committee of the House of Commons heard testimony from representatives of ten native groups and the Government of New Brunswick. On April 29 clause by clause consideration of the Bill began in committee. That went on until the early hours of the next morning. On May 2, I appeared again before the Standing Committee on clause by clause study and the Bill was reported to the House with two amendments.

I would point out to my friend, the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) that one of the amendments accepted was the amendment of his colleague from Prince Edward Island to include larvae in the definition of fish. That is the item which the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly) is trying to remove, which is most unusual.

On May 16, the Government gave notice of amendment motions to safeguard aboriginal rights. I would remind all of those who are here to keep in mind that the Government is proposing an amendment that says nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any existing aboriginal or treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

There has been a common misconception in the House, among the public and the media that somehow or other the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River is the only person opposed to this Bill. That is not so, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the New Democratic Party clearly concurs in that opposition as does the House Leader for the New Democratic Party—

Ms. Mitchell: We always act as a group.