

Adjournment Debate

covers not only Canadian commercial fishing in U.S. waters but Canadian sport fishing boats in such waters.

The minister has been quoted as saying that such restrictions were the "name of the game" and that Canada would have to consider reciprocal action. But at that point there had been no enforcement of the ban on Canadian sport fishing in their waters. Today, however, at Haines, Alaska, the U.S. coastguard swept all Canadian boats which had been engaged in a traditional salmon derby from the water, not only to the discomfort of the Canadian competitors but also to the discomfort of the Alaskan sponsors of the derby who rely a great deal upon the participation of Canadian boats for the success of their enterprise.

If Canadian sport fishermen were excluded from the ban, perhaps the coastguard in Alaska did not get the message. I am not sure about that. In any event, we are running the risk of seeing a substantial number of Canadian sport fishing boats prevented from continuing to fish in American waters; I refer particularly to the Point Roberts area which is almost exclusively fished by Canadian boats from the Crescent Beach side. I do not know whether any action has been taken in that regard.

● (2217)

I would therefore like the parliamentary secretary to deal with at what stage enforcement is at in terms of the U.S. legislation and in terms of Canadian boats. I want to know whether there will be any warning to Canadian fishermen to stay out of American waters.

The second aspect of this question deals with reciprocal action. It is my own view that we should not ban American fishermen from Canadian waters. The reason is that the economic impact of that would be tremendous, not merely in British Columbia but all across the country. According to the figures we were given today in committee, there is a ratio of almost ten to one in favour of Americans having boats in Canada versus Canadians having boats in the U.S., and 20 to one in terms of individual fishermen fishing on the Canadian side of the border. There is a considerable tourist benefit as a result, so I am not suggesting that we should reciprocate with a ban on U.S. fishermen. What I am saying is that this gives us a golden opportunity to re-examine a couple of areas in terms of the way U.S. fishermen fish for salmon in Canadian waters.

To some extent this may apply to the east coast, but I want to deal just with the Pacific coast. British Columbians are tired of 50-foot alleged American sport boats coming up and canning salmon for weeks and weeks, shipping that salmon to the United States and selling it. They are tired of seeing the use of fish finders, which are electronic devices not dissimilar to the ones which our own commercial trollers are using. They are tired of seeing downriggers which can catch any level of troll for salmon, exactly the same equipment as our own sophisticated commercial trollers are using. I do not call that sport fishing. That is just trying to get as much meat as

[Mr. Leggatt.]

possible in a short time. That, to me, violates the principle of the use of a recreational resource.

What I am suggesting is that we have to give consideration to limiting the amount of salmon which can be taken and held by one boat, limiting the amount that can be exported to the United States, and restricting the kind of gear which is now being used in Canadian waters. I do not say that that is a response to the U.S. position. I do not say that that is a reciprocal action. I think that is something we should have done a long time ago, and we now have a golden opportunity to re-examine our position.

I might say that tonight in committee the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson) indicated that an announcement may be forthcoming very shortly with regard to the export of sport-caught salmon in Canadian waters. I look forward to that announcement, and welcome it. I think this is a good time to decide to start controlling the extent of alleged sport fishing by major U.S. charter vessels. We have to keep in mind that those charter vessels quite often buy nothing in Canada. They load up in Bellingham. They buy all their provisions in Bellingham. In fact, there are many cases of yachts in B.C. water radioing to Bellingham when they run out of supplies. They make sure they do not have to buy in Canada. They bring provisions by ship to supply their needs. It seems to me that that is not the kind of sport fishing we want in Canadian waters, so we had better have a careful look at the way we regulate sport fishing.

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, both the Canadian and United States notes on the question of suspending the implementation of the 1978 interim reciprocal fisheries agreement—both of which have been tabled in this House—indicate that the reciprocal halibut fisheries should continue. However, the implementation of this will be under discussion between officials of the two countries with a view to the Canadian government's being able to provide firm advice to Canadian halibut fishermen as far as possible in advance of the June 19 reopening of the halibut fishery.

As to the hon. member's second point with regard to the decision of the United States to enforce its fisheries management and conservation act against all Canadian sport fishermen, I can only repeat the statement of the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc) in the House yesterday that Canadian waters are open to United States recreational fishermen.

I should also point out that the Canadian government has not taken any action against American recreational fishing craft in Canadian waters, and the minister stated today in the House of Commons that Canadian waters were open to licensed U.S. recreational fishermen. In any event, no action is contemplated at any time with respect to American tourists using Canadian craft. The minister sent a telex stating the foregoing to all his provincial counterparts.