

*Fisheries Act*

people. Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that we must examine this industry more closely.

[English]

My concern is perhaps related to the fact that I am also a housewife, a mother and a person who is looking at this Bill from the perspective of an amateur sports fishing enthusiast. I am concerned about how this Bill will impact on those like myself. I do not pretend to be any kind of an expert in the field of fishing nor do I know as much about it as I would like to know. I do know that fish costs an awful lot of money in the store; yet fishing does not bring that kind of income to the fisherpersons—and I use that word advisedly because I will come to it in a moment—who are involved in the industry.

First I would like to know if we are dealing with a shortage and if that is the reason why the costs are so high. If we are dealing with high costs, it is because we have not implemented the kind of husbandry programs which would be necessary to ensure the stock in an ongoing way for future generations?

As a sports fisherperson, I went salmon fishing in a very beautiful part of New Brunswick. We were fishing in one of its famous salmon holes. After we went fishing, I spoke to some people who were on the shore discussing the problems surrounding the lobster fishery. I mentioned that I was as interested in eating lobster as I was in catching and eating salmon. The gentleman with whom I was conversing said, "Well, you had better eat those lobsters now because there will not be any in the near future". I asked him what he meant by that. He said, "Well, lady, do you know that they are allowed to catch either male or female lobsters and that they catch female lobsters when they are ready to lay their eggs?" As a result of the overfishing in the lobster fishery, we will not have lobster any longer and we will not have the joy of eating that delectable food. I felt that what I learned that day was very interesting and I added it to my list of concerns.

My concern regards the approach taken to proper conservation of lobster, and I am sure it relates to other fish, both in fresh and in salt water. I would hope that the Minister who will be getting some control over the fishery will exercise good judgment when it comes to protecting this resource for the future.

Another time, I was in northern Quebec fishing for pike and walleye. That experience was a great deal of fun. By chance we came across some Indian people who were fishing for sturgeon. My husband was quite intrigued by the method by which they caught this sturgeon. I do not know if you are aware of the way one fishes for sturgeon, Mr. Speaker, but one uses these long, hook-like things which go along the ground because sturgeons eat from underneath their gullets. The restrictions on the right to fish for sturgeon was not explained to us at that time. The next time we went fishing, my husband brought along one of these special fishing lines that are used to catch sturgeon. We wanted to catch some sturgeon because we had been given a gift of a sturgeon by the Indian we met in the area. We had taken it home and had it smoked and it was utterly delectable.

So, back we went on our next fishing trip, all prepared to catch our own sturgeon. At that time, the local warden came over and told my husband that he was contravening the law and that we, as non-aboriginal peoples, had no right to catch sturgeon. He told us that if we did not put away this particular form of fishing tackle our car would be impounded. This brings me to ask a question with respect to the kinds of regulations that the Minister will have at his disposal. Will the Minister be allowed to issue a regulation that will change the normal traditional rights of aboriginal people? Will they no longer have the exclusive right to catch sturgeon? In terms of custom within their own land and waters, I do not think that would be particularly to their liking. I wonder if there will be consultation in that regard, or if the Minister will use his discretionary powers in a non-discretionary way.

● (1620)

I would like to talk about another point which has caused me some concern. Under this new legislation with the right to issue certain regulations, will the Minister have the right to determine who is a fisherman? He will have the right to determine what is a fish when it is on the land, whether it is gutted, skinned, headed or todged but I would like to know if the Minister will have the right to determine who is a fisherperson. I use the term "fisherperson" quite deliberately. I do not know how many people are aware of the fact that a man, his wife and children may be in a boat fishing together, but if the man, his wife and children apply for unemployment insurance benefits, they have to be careful what the names of the children are and what the name of his wife is. If the wife's name is Sam, or any name which sounds like a male name, she will get unemployment insurance payments without question. However, if he is named June, Joan, or any other commonly known female name, her right to unemployment insurance benefits is questioned. The same is true for children.

I had a very interesting experience in 1978 when attending a meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. There were some women from Newfoundland at that meeting who came to ask for equal rights as partners in the fishing industry. With all due respect to my friends from Newfoundland, I did not completely understand the language which was being used concerning the greening of the fish and everything else. However, I learned to my absolute horror that these women, Frankie, Jackie and John, had a different kind of right to pay, depending upon the Government's interpretation of their names. The name gave them the sex and the right or the lack of right to receive unemployment insurance benefits. I think discrimination against fisherpersons is unacceptable. I do not particularly want to change the term from fisherman to fisherwoman, but if that is what we have to do in order to receive proper payment, then we will do that.

It concerns me that the legislation points to sports commercial and native fishing groups and the difference in those user groups. I have travelled along the banks and shores of the coastal waters in the East and have visited small communities. The Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) told us that there were 1,300 small communities along the coastline. It