

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES—RESTRICTIONS IN SAINT JOHN HARBOUR AND BAY OF FUNDY

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (St. John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to take everyone here to the quiet and peaceful waters of Saint John Harbour, because I want to speak about salmon fishing. This is the third time that I have availed myself of the opportunity to speak on the so-called late show. Both my previous efforts were crowned with success. I know that the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) could not be here at this time. I know he is keenly interested in the matter and has suggested that it may be brought up at some later date when he is in the house. Unfortunately, the salmon season has begun. At this time I wish to put on the record a story of hardship existing in the area I represent. I hope the situation will be remedied. Since the minister is not here and since it is late in the week I will keep my remarks brief. When the minister returns to Ottawa I hope he will read my remarks in *Hansard* and try to remedy some of the matters which officials of his department have overlooked.

It seems that the department has moved too quickly and too drastically in my area in the field of conservation. We are all in favour of conservation. Salmon fishermen of Saint John have always supported any measures that were required. They are in the business of catching salmon in Saint John Harbour and in the Bay of Fundy, and they sell their luscious fish to markets in New York, to the Seignory Club, the Rideau Club and to others who can afford it. We do not see it in Ottawa and it is not served in the parliamentary restaurant. Instead we seem, in our restaurant, to invest our money in expensive western beef. If we were really interested we might obtain some of our delightful Saint John River salmon, one of the great gourmet fishes of the world.

There has been in St. John Harbour and its vicinity a fishing season of 66 days. Because of a government edict, that season has now been reduced to 46 fishing days. In other words, the salmon fishermen had five days a week in which to fish. Now, without any notice or consultation with the industry, someone in Ottawa has pressed the button and

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the fishermen in Saint John can now fish only two days a week.

● (4:00 p.m.)

A year ago the fishermen were told they required a licence. They were told this without any prior notice. Some fishermen made heavy investments in equipment. Some got their gear together, purchased new boats, made plans to share their catches and contracts were set up. They were all set for a good fishing season this year. They were prepared to play their part in the economic life of this community when all of a sudden they were told they could fish only two days a week. This made a very serious impact on their catches. There are days when the water is not right for salmon fishing. I do not imagine too many people in this area know too much about salmon fishing or angling. Those who have tried to catch salmon know the conditions have to be right. Even a southeast wind can make a difference. If it is raining or not the right tide, this will affect their catch.

The number of fishing days has been reduced from 66 days to only 21 theoretical days. This will spoil the markets which have been built up in Boston, New York and exclusive places in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto for this delicacy. These are now going to be lost. Two days a week for fishing will make a difference to the storage of the salmon prior to shipment. Shipping it will no longer be an everyday occurrence.

I hope there will be a reply from a representative of the minister to my sincere suggestion that the government take another look at the situation. I do not blame the government. They are trying to do something. Salmon fishing is on the downgrade, and there is a lack of salmon all over the world. We know the Russians and Japanese are fishing in our waters, but why pick on little old Saint John Harbour? There have never been any other changes with regard to the east coast. I stand to be corrected on that, but I have not learned of any other restrictive changes of this nature with respect to salmon fishing on the east coast.

I checked with the fisheries critic of the opposition and he has informed me he has no knowledge of any similar restrictions. This is not the west coast, but the east coast to which I am referring. I suggest the government check to see whether this was not too drastic a step taken too soon and without notice. Perhaps from the goodness of their hearts the civil servants might give the fishermen in