

*Fisheries*

to build sufficient storage in Atlantic Canada and which will be in a position to study the marketing structure of our product in the United States. This will give us better information than we have now so that we are less dependent on those who market fish abroad. This marketing agency should have enough capital to build storage for the fishery, and to lend the fishery money so that fishery products can be stored in eastern Canada, so fishermen will not have to go out and distress sell, which kills the market. This happens mainly with small, Canadian owned companies which do not have financing, and God knows that in Canada we cannot depend on the banks to help, especially small Canadian entrepreneurs in situations like this.

I believe representatives from the fishing industry should be represented in the marketing organization, including fishermen and plant owners, as well as representatives of labour, consumers, the federal government and provincial governments. This agency could guarantee that fishermen would be paid a certain price. It should be in a position to know in advance what price the market will bear for our products and thereby guarantee the plants a price for a certain quota so that the fisherman is assured of a fair price. For example, in my constituency in February and March the fisherman is planning. He has to plan. He has to spend money to repair his gear and his boat. On the other hand, there is no certainty about the price he is going to receive. I believe this is very detrimental to our industry and the people who operate it.

I assure the hon. member that I share his concern about the immediate problems. I hope that the government will profit from this crisis and intervene in the fishing industry in a way which will give us permanently more information in our hands and better protection for our plants and for our fishermen. I also hope that the government and the Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc) will look at the tariff situation. For example, if we ship our fish products by blocks to the United States, there is, I believe, no tariff at all, or very little; but as soon as we touch it, or as soon as there is any attempt at any value added tax or forward integration, the tariffs go dramatically up.

● (1630)

I believe the government of this country should make an attempt to negotiate with the Americans, perhaps in the context of the current GATT negotiations, in order to get a better deal for the fisheries. I do not know the situation in the west coast fisheries but I suspect it is about the same. In the case of the Atlantic provinces, it is the nicest example of economic colonization that we have seen in this country for some time.

I find it difficult to reconcile the objectives expressed by the hon. member on the question of government reorganization with his party's stated concern about government spending and red tape. When one talks about cutting out agencies or services within departments and establishing them in new, smaller departments, that can only lead to more bureaucratic organization.

In my constituency fishing is the most important industry, if not in financial terms then certainly in terms of people. At no time, however, has any fisherman or any fishing co-operative, plant worker or owner brought up this question. What they are concerned about is the gov-

[Mr. Breau.]

ernment's responsiveness to their problems. The case I have referred to was dealt with by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. The Law of the Sea Conference is a matter for the Department of External Affairs.

I think it was a good move to merge the department of fisheries, which I believe was the smallest department, with the Department of the Environment because there is a direct relationship between environmental matters and fisheries. Generally speaking, the most important aspect of our fisheries is the protection of resources.

**Mr. McGrath:** You are speaking against the policies of your own caucus.

**Mr. Breau:** No, I am not. At the Halifax meeting we discussed government organization as far as fisheries was concerned, and out of that came a resolution entitled "The Atlantic Liberal Action Plan". That resolution was to the effect that there should be a minister responsible for fisheries matters. In my view that is what we have, and a good one.

**Mr. McGrath:** That is not what the resolution said.

**Mr. Breau:** Yes, it is. I have not got it in front of me but I will be happy to send a copy to the hon. member. The Atlantic Liberal Action Plan makes very good reading for anyone interested in Atlantic matters, as I know the hon. member is. Being from Newfoundland he certainly understands the importance people attach to their regional identity. When he refers to the minister of fisheries as being from the north shore of New Brunswick, however, I must point out that the minister is from the east shore and that he understands why it is important to the Atlantic provinces to retain proper geographical definition.

There are not only the day to day problems of the fisheries to be concerned about; there are occasions when disaster or disease might strike the resource, and here the responsiveness of the government is very important. On many occasions since the new department was set up I have brought problems to its attention and have always received an excellent response.

**An hon. Member:** What about the pollution of the Bay at Caraquet?

**Mr. Breau:** That is one of the bays that produces the best oysters in the world. There was urgency to that problem and the government gave \$150,000 to deal with it immediately so that the reputation of such a good product would not be ruined. Because there was a bigger department with a bigger budget and better organization, it was possible to transfer funds from one part of the department to another. There was no red tape. The people working in the same regional office in Halifax had contact with the office here, and the problem was solved very quickly.

Another example of the work of the Department of the Environment regarding an important aspect of the industry is the creation of the small craft harbours branch, which has proven to be an effective and responsive arm of government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin):** The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).