

*Adjournment Debate*

the second is the effective spending of Canadian taxpayers' dollars.

• (1810)

Why, in heaven's name, did we choose, as a nation, to spend \$140 million to refit a 21-year old Class 4 ice-breaker when we could have built a brand new, more powerful Class 7 ice-breaker designed by Canadians for only \$55 million at a saving of some \$85 million? Frankly, it is embarrassing. Can anyone out there explain it to me? I cannot.

**Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Don Valley East for his question and for the way he has elaborated on the decisions that have been made.

While he talks about the *Oden*, yes much of that work was financed by the Canadian government, particularly to the oil industry doing work in the Beaufort Sea. It was with the assistance of the government programs that the offshore exploration at Canmor was able to design and build during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In looking at the over-all questions, our largest ice-breaker, the *Louis Saint-Laurent*, was in need of a refitting.

**Mr. Redway:** Class 4, 21 years old.

**Mr. Belsher:** As the hon. member says, it was a Class 4 and 21 years of age, but by refitting you can also get a good many more years out of it.

The proposal that was submitted to the government by HDIL to complete an extensive refit of the *Louis Saint-Laurent* was priced at \$71 million and was scheduled for completion within 28 months. Had we replaced the *Louis Saint-Laurent* with a new one, the figure we were given at the time would have cost us \$240 million.

Had the *Louis Saint-Laurent* contract been completed by HDIL on time and within budget, there would be little to second guess. However, the shipyard experienced difficulties in removing all the asbestos from the ship during the early phase of the project and a second

significant delay occurred when unforeseen deteriorated steel work had to be renewed and replaced.

Members will recall that this government had examined the feasibility of constructing the *Polar 8* for year-round operation in Canada's high Arctic and then, as the hon. member has alluded, for budget constraints we had to back away from that.

The Coast Guard have decommissioned the *Terry Fox*, a ship designed and built by Canadians for operations in the Beaufort Sea, and to have been chartered by the Coast Guard. There have been 10 major vessels which have been decommissioned. The remaining vessels will be asked to do a lot more work than they now do. This all has to be done within the framework of the budget constraints that each department has to work under.

## FISHERIES

**Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a question that I put to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on February 24. It had to do with compensation.

I just want to review what it is we are faced with and the reason I wanted to zero in on it this evening. I think everybody in the House by now is aware of the fact that the recent announcement in the reduced northern cod quotas means a reduction in jobs, lay-offs, and reduced plant operations. For many people, it means no income at all. In the face of this, at various times, even really dating back from last year when the fishery was pretty dismal as well largely because of ice but for other reasons as well, there were promises made and commitments that were interpreted by the bureaucracy differently than I think the intention that was put forward by the politicians.

The end result was confusion, anxiety, and I am not over-stretching or dramatizing, downright fear in some cases. When you have no income that is a pretty reasonable thing to be afraid of.

Let me give an example of a plant worker. I was in the riding on the weekend and I discussed this. It is wrong to get into people's salaries, but I had to for reasons of the point that I want to make here. These people do not make a lot of money, to begin with.