

Government Organization Act, 1970

[Translation]

Mr. Cyr: Mr. Chairman, I can say that the fishermen of eastern Canada are not too much concerned with the titles of legislative measures. Action is more important to them and this is even truer with the minister and the cabinet we have had in Ottawa to govern the country over the past few years.

I furthermore wish to point out that the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate states that British Columbia also has its department of Fisheries. Well, I hear that British Columbia has no such department but that the fisheries are the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Conservation in that province.

I do not wish to delay unduly the business of the committee, but I feel like those who spoke in the House last night that the motion of the hon. member for Saint John's East is not valid under the circumstances, and I am therefore requesting the co-operation of all the members of this committee so that we may proceed with the vote immediately.

[English]

Mr. Lundrigan: Before the next member is recognized, I wish to extend my congratulations to the hon. member for Gaspé on his tremendous research. I would like to ask his co-operation when I am preparing the elaborate speech I will make at some time. The hon. member has done a lot of research and is to be congratulated.

Mr. McCleave: There is a very short answer to the interjection made a few moments ago by the hon. member for St. Boniface. It is a matter of how far we have to proceed in making the very important point that the ministry of fisheries should not be abolished in the interests of insensitive technocracy. That is the point we are trying to make.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCleave: The fact that we made our point in four or five hours is an indication of the warmth that we have for the subject. It does not indicate that we are achieving the goal. The one who can indicate that is the minister of fisheries.

[Translation]

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I made a mistake a few minutes ago. I would like to correct the situation—

[English]

I wish to quote the last sentence of the remarks of the hon. member for St. John's East as reported at page 3458 of *Hansard*:

I want the minister to know that we are prepared to hold up this part of the bill until hell freezes over.

I used the wrong word when I said "snow". I want to rectify that.

[The Acting Chairman (Mr. Richard).]

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member has quoted correctly. We are in a position where we have to be very sure of the strange words that intrude into our debate. However, the hon. member did state the essence of what the hon. member of St. John's East had said. This is such an important point that we make no apology for raising it and for persisting in it. A member from the government side has now talked about the importance of fisheries. That is an important gain from our standpoint. We now have some recognition from a member opposite. He sees the point we have been trying to make.

Is the minister of fisheries rejecting the request of the hon. member for St. John's East that this new department be renamed the department of environment and fisheries? Is it as simple as that, or does the minister think there should be more argument? Possibly we could hear the minister's answer. After all, debate is supposed to be the essence of this place. It is so rare that we get into committee of the whole many of us lose our debating instincts. What bothers the minister about renaming the department the department of the environment and fisheries?

Mr. McGrath: It does not change the bill.

Mr. McCleave: It does not change the bill. Perhaps it will strengthen it when the minister is dealing with the spending part for fisheries. I think that is important.

What will make the department of the environment work is the fact that the government will appoint the member for Capilano as the minister. This man commands the respect of members of the opposition. He worked diligently as minister of fisheries and has very definite ideas about pollution. Because of this, the government is lumping together all these factors into this change. The danger is that one member on the government side is qualified to combine a war on pollution with the problem of administering the department of fisheries, and "the government is creating the department of environment which will take advantage of those talents. I am very serious in making this argument. I talked about this before when I referred to the schizophrenic aspects of what the minister is up against. I do not want to make a personal argument or an argument directed *ad hominum* at the legislation. I prefer not to be in that position. The reason that this organization bill has been introduced and the reason fisheries is being swallowed up in this new department of the environment is the minister. I cannot think of any other reason.

If we were starting this country over again and knew the subjects to be assigned, but did not know the qualifications of a group of men, we might think of renewable resources as befitting a minister. The farmers, fishermen and foresters—would come under that department because they deal with renewable resources. Mining, energy, steel and other inanimate forces would come under another department. However, this is not the way the reorganization is being carried out at this time. The minister may say that environment is one concept and