

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Jack Burghardt for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I wish to continue the debate and refer to elements related to the West Coast fishery. Before the luncheon adjournment I had spoken at length about some matters concerning fleet rationalization and the buy-back being proposed by the Government. I indicated that certain criteria had to be followed before there could be any acceptance of that program.

Those criteria must also include a commitment to extensive salmon enhancement on the coast of British Columbia. It is not just a matter of trying to reduce the fleet and control the population strictly by management techniques, allowing larger and larger escapements while at the same time allowing more and more destruction of the spawning habitat. There has to be a balanced aggressive commitment to salmon enhancement along with a fleet restructuring program.

● (1550)

The next extremely important issue is whether Canadians will get proper access to those stocks which originate in Canadian rivers. This question comes up as concern about our international relations regarding salmon stocks mounts. There seem to be four extremely important parts to this international aspect.

First, we have no sound data on which to base judgments about what happens to those stocks once they leave Canadian territorial waters and go to the high seas. We know that over the years there has been a high seas gill-netting operation, which it is felt causes great harm to the salmon stocks that eventually return to Canada.

Second, there must be an extremely aggressive attempt by the Government to move Japanese and other Asian fishing countries out of the high seas gill-net business. It is a destructive and wasteful program that targets on fish from Canada, and it must be eliminated. The Government is not providing any solid activity on that front at the moment, but it should.

There has been mention in the House of reinstating the high seas tagging program in an attempt to determine what is happening to stocks on the high seas and to develop strategies to ensure that they survive and return to Canada.

The third aspect of our international relations regarding salmon stocks and resources in Canada is the interception treaty. It is absolute folly for the Government to pursue actively the matter of getting an interception treaty with the Americans. On the other hand, we cannot sell out to them. We must resolve the problems so Canadians will not be required to give away Canadian fish in order to get an interception treaty. There has to be pressure for a fair and equitable interception treaty that will allow us to get on with the business of enhancing our stocks and ensuring that they do not wind up in

The Address—Mr. Skelly

the holds of American ships but, rather, that they end up in Canadian ships. It is vitally important that the interception treaty be pursued and that fish originating in Canada be left with Canadians.

The last matter is not a minor aggravation by any means. I refer to resolving boundary disputes and fishing problems. We have examples of the American Coast Guard seizing Canadian ships that cross boundaries. When dealing with the same kind of problem I think Canadians have been more neighbourly toward the Americans, but the whole question of boundary positions and boundary transgressions has to be dealt with more aggressively by the Canadian Government. This is an international package and it must be resolved. There are interests on which we can assist the Americans, but in turn we must achieve our own goals. The high seas data gathering process is particularly important, so is eliminating the high seas gill-net fishery against our salmon stock as well as the interception treaty.

The area where the Government shows the least guts is on the question of habitat protection. The Conservative Party has also failed to put its position on the record and to take a stand for the protection of habitat. Without spawning grounds we have no resource. The greatest conflicts come in the area of resource harvesting—logging, mining, fishing and land development. At some time we must go on record that we are going to delineate the critical fish habitat and that no one is going to destroy it. It must be held in trust for future generations of Canadians.

In British Columbia the NDP Government put in place an agricultural land reserve program because only 3 per cent of the land was capable of raising agricultural crops. A minimum amount of the land base and the water resource in British Columbia is capable of maintaining a very valuable resource in fisheries. We must put a fisheries habitat reserve system in place which is sacrosanct, not the kind that Dr. Pearse advocated with no net loss of habitat or "build yourself a small showcase hatchery and you can wreck a valley bottom". There are examples of the destruction of habitat on the Fraser, on the Skeena, projects such as the Kemano Project, the Quinsome, Amax—we have to end all those. We want a delineation of critical fish habitat and we want a sacrosanct mechanism to preserve such a fisheries habitat reserve system. Estuary land, critical marine fish rearing areas, rivers and streams that are critical to the resource, must be delineated and preserved in perpetuity.

We must have integrated resource management studies in which areas can be developed by integrating resource development without harming them. I refer to places such as the Nimpkish system, the Owekino Rivers in that area, the Dean, the Kimsquit and areas that are vitally critical. If logging goes ahead without concern about integrated resource management study, recommendations and development, then we will write off the whole area and the resource will gradually disappear. Ultimately there has to be a resource management board to deal with these questions and to make the decision on an