

Government Organization

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I accept the point of clarification. It is not really a question of privilege.

Mr. Faour: Mr. Speaker, it was my understanding that as lead speaker for his party and as lead speaker for my party, the comments should be fairly general. I understood his comments should point to his party's proposals and ideas as to how this bill should be written. That is what my comments were about.

I was saying that in the area of fishery development, if the Conservative party takes power after the next election, with their backward looking views in this area we may be back to the fishing admiral days. If anyone knows Newfoundland history, they will know that was one of the most repressive types of arrangements in our history. It went out with the end of the eighteenth century.

I am going to deal with Parts I and II of this bill. Part I sets up a separate department of fisheries and oceans. Part II establishes a fisheries and oceans research advisory council. As I mentioned, other members of my party will deal with other sections of the bill.

We in this party support the setting up of a separate department of fisheries and oceans. As has been pointed out, it reflects a campaign promise on the part of the government made in 1974 to set up a separate department of fisheries. It is interesting the government is getting around to it just before the coming election. The government has belatedly recognized the proper emphasis that should be placed on the fishery and the importance of the fishery to the economy of this country.

In Newfoundland there are some 27,000 fishermen prosecuting the fishery. In Newfoundland, fishery processing involves some 8,000 man-years of work. To give a further indication of the size of the fishery in Newfoundland, in 1978 some 430,000 tonnes were harvested with a value of \$106 million. Nationally some 66,000 fishermen are involved in the fishery. The value to Canada nationally was close to half a billion dollars, representing a catch of 1¼ million tonnes of fish. This indicates that the fishery is of extreme importance to this country. By setting up this separate department the government is only now recognizing this fact by its actions and not just by its words.

This new department must be concerned with fisheries development. In fisheries development, the department has a very powerful tool to shape not only the fishing industry but the communities and the social structure of the areas where the fishing process takes place. Our contention is that the department must move toward three basic areas. First, there has to be local or Canadian control of the industry. Second, there has to be maximum benefit established on the east coast to coastal communities. Third, we have to manage the stocks and issue licences in light of the social requirements and social problems that must be solved in the communities where the fishing industry is located.

I will begin by dealing with foreign investment in the fishery. This is becoming a serious problem on the west coast of this country. Foreign interest now control over 10 per cent

[Mr. Alexander.]

of the industry's assets on the west coast. The bulk of these foreign interests are in Japan. The frightening thing is not so much that 10 per cent is foreign-controlled, but that this 10 per cent has been acquired almost overnight.

The cause of this has been the lack of proper planning of the industry on the west coast. The west coast fishing industry, as with the industry on the east coast, should be an integral part of an industrial strategy or plan based on Canada's resources. Our leader said this when he was on the west coast last week. He pointed out that the cause of the problem of foreign investment is the lack of an industrial strategy.

The reason for the influx of Japanese capital with its resultant control is the fact that it has not been available locally. Canadian banks and lending institutions have been reluctant to make loans to canneries, fish processors and fishermen for years. We feel the government should, within the framework of an over-all industrial strategy, make sure that capital is available so that fish companies and individual fishermen do not have to go to foreign sources in order to obtain capital to develop their industry.

On the east coast, the government's record is a little better in this area. At least in one case the government used its licensing powers to ensure that valuable fish resources did not fall into the hands of foreigners. I refer specifically to the proposed takeover of the Ocean Harvesters processing plant in Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, by the Nord See group of West Germany. I applaud this approach on the part of the government and I hope this trend continues.

In their approach to the fisheries, the Tories would seem to give us investment at any cost. Certainly they pressured the federal government and the provincial government of Newfoundland for this type of investment. They supported the takeover by the West German company and generally have supported this sort of foreign intrusion into this Canadian resource which, in the long term, would not do anything for us. I applaud the government's approach to this question and hope the new department continues on this route. I am sure the present minister will ensure that it does.

Another area of concern is how development of the industry takes place. In the sixties, proposals for development were very capital intensive. There were plans and proposals for large freezer trawlers plying the Grand Banks and the east coast fishery. That, of course, was before the advent of the 200-mile limit. It was at a time when foreign countries had their massive capital intensive fleets on our offshore and were reaping great benefits.

Fisheries development must be considered with social development as well. The midshore and offshore fishery, which is a sort of capital intensive fishery that was recommended ten years ago and beyond, requires a centralized development. It requires the establishment of large cities and towns, large centres from where the fishery can be serviced and prosecuted. This tends to reinforce the deterioration of the small coastal rural communities, especially on the east coast of this country.