

fixed budget. In addition, I give the undertaking that we will do everything we can to have a definite answer on this by mid-June.

FISHERIES—CLOSING OF SWIFTSURE BANKS ON WEST COAST

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, May 31, I asked the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. LeBlanc) the following question:

Today the minister received a telegram from some very irate fishermen in British Columbia because the minister made a very major concession to the United States by closing the Swiftsure Bank without getting anything in return. How much longer will the fishermen have to wait for an agreement, and what are they going to get in return for all their losses?

The minister replied:

As to how long the resolution of this issue will take, I can tell the hon. member that it will not take very long.

As we know, the answer came last Friday with the Canadian ultimatum to American fishermen and the American government. That does have some attractive emotional solutions for the short term, but it has a very long term disaster built into it. It is a case of brinkmanship in this whole matter.

For the past several years, the Americans have been getting the best end of the deal. Now it is like a withdrawal from cocaine or heroin. The withdrawal symptoms are pretty bad. When our ambassador starts getting tough in his negotiations, they do not like it. That is why they asked us to close the Swiftsure and were giving us a hard time.

The problem is that in all of these negotiations, our fishermen have been kept in an extended period of uncertainty. As I said, in the short-term it has some emotional gains. It has the support of the fishermen at the present time because they have seen their position in the fishing areas off the Pacific coast taken away from them year by year by American fishermen and our weak-kneed approach. Friday's announcement is the tough posture and the tough stance which all of us have been looking for and for which all of us are grateful. It inspires in us some hope that we will make some gains.

We have to keep in mind that Canadian fishermen, as a result of having to draw back out of the water they are accustomed to fishing in, stand to lose something like \$7 million this year. The parliamentary secretary shakes his head. Some reports say \$3 million or \$4 million, some say \$7 million. In any event, it is a lot of bucks and it is the fishermen who will feel this loss.

In the long haul, it is not going to be very attractive to our fishermen. Rest assured they support the decision right now in the hope they are going to get something in return in the long haul. Our hopes are pinned on the negotiations that will come on June 19 and 20. All of us in the House hope something substantive will happen then and that the Canadian fishermen, for whom we are responsible, will benefit as a result.

The related question is, how do you make up the losses as a result of the dislocation that takes place because of having to draw back? We can say to these fishermen, go to the Swiftsure Bank as we did in 1956. We can tell them to go to the

Adjournment Debate

Swiftsure Bank, fish for 24 hours a day, catch all you can before they go up the Strait of Juan de Fuca and to Georges Bank before the Americans have a chance to get at them. That will cut off the fishing supply to the Americans. I would point out it also cuts off the supply to the Fraser River run.

The question is, what are the fishermen going to do who are accustomed to fishing in the Fraser River and who will have their catch lost? We say tell them to go to the open water, but at least 50 per cent of them do not have the kind of equipment which would enable them to do so. This will mean a great deal of dislocation for fishermen in the lower mainland of British Columbia.

● (2212)

After so much brinkmanship we are entitled to some answers. What does the minister intend to do for the fishermen who are affected? Will he provide them with some assistance in the short term? In the ensuing few weeks will he introduce stop gap measures which will assure them a livelihood? What steps does he intend to take to make sure that the Fraser River fishermen can gain the livelihood to which they are accustomed and entitled?

Mr. Hugh A. Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, Swiftsure Bank is now open to salmon trollers, and has been since June 2, when Canada announced its decision to suspend the provisional implementation of the 1978 interim reciprocal fisheries agreement. Although we lost almost three weeks of fishing on these grounds, this was in a last ditch attempt to resolve the west coast salmon troll problems that arose under the agreement.

A relatively small group of trollers would have been involved; however, the rest of the fishing area off British Columbia was available to them. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, although these fishermen were not permitted to fish Swiftsure during that period, it in no way meant that they were prevented from fishing in other areas.

I say this with respect to the hon. member: this afternoon we had a meeting in the fisheries committee with the boundary negotiators and there will be a further meeting with the boundary negotiators on Thursday. Because of the limited time available to me during this period I would recommend to the hon. member, in view of his interest in this subject, that he attend the meeting on Thursday. This will give him an opportunity to question the officials in detail, a procedure which I think would be to his benefit.

Mr. Friesen: I will be there.

FISHERIES—U.S. BAN ON SPORT FISHING IN AMERICAN WATERS

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my intervention concerns a similar subject but I want to deal with sport fishing rather than with the commercial fishery. The matter arises from a question I asked in the House yesterday concerning the enforcement of the United States law which