

Supply

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward and the Government is looking forward to learning what Hon. Members opposite have to say about changes in the way the commercial fishery takes place. Are they in favour of measures to reduce the cost of fishing? Are they in favour of measures for ending the frantic and self-defeating race to beat other fishermen, to be the first and, perhaps, at the rate we are going, to be the last to catch fish? We would like to learn how they propose to deal with the problems of managing a common property resource, one which is owned by everyone and by no one. Are they prepared to support us in moving to a new era in which the participants have a reasonable effort, an investment, will bring a reasonable return and in which fishermen take increasing responsibility for the management measures necessary to ensure their own survival in business?

It is important that they dispel the suspicion outlined in graphic detail today that this debate, on a Friday, with no notice and on the eve of a visit by fishermen from British Columbia, who come here—

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member knows that there are rules for laying down motions for an Opposition Day. He also knows that the Government chooses the Opposition Day.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman knows that we sit here today discussing one of the most important issues before the electors of British Columbia. It is an issue that will have a profound impact depending on how we, collectively in this House, take decisions affecting lives in the Province of British Columbia. He knows we sit here with that kind of mandate, that kind of responsibility, with less than a few dozen people, on no notice. Why is that?

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member, who is well and favourably known to me, is abusing the privileges of the House and the rules. I say that because it is the Government that sets the date and it set Friday as the Opposition Day. That must assume that whatever subject was chosen by the Opposition for that day was of no consequence or of no importance.

The second thing that I want to point out, with respect, is that the House knows that notice of debate is usually served on the Chair late on the previous afternoon. My friends in the NDP served notice in exactly the same way prior to a vote on a very crucial matter, namely, the testing of the Cruise missile.

I think this is just a herring, if I may put it that way, and I will not say what colour, that is being dragged into this debate, and I do not think it is worthy of the Hon. Member or his Party.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The point is well taken. I should like the Parliamentary Secretary to resume his speech on the subject.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to resume my speech on the subject but I do not presume to have it written spontaneously by Hon. Members opposite. I am not prepared

to debate who sets the Opposition Day. The Government very well set the Opposition Day, but the Government does not set the agenda nor does the Government tell the Opposition what the topic shall be. The Government did not decide, as we sat here yesterday, to have notice come across the House at five minutes past the hour of six o'clock.

I say it is important that Opposition Members dispel the suspicion—and this is nothing more in this debate than a cynical, political stunt—otherwise I fear the stunt becomes so obvious that they will pay a grave price with the Canadian public and, more important, with their own electors, the people of British Columbia, when they discover that they have been trying, for political reasons, to undermine the Government's genuine efforts and the efforts of people involved on a consultative basis in British Columbia—

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I always felt that it was not in order to impute motives. Here we have a speaker on the Government side, a Parliamentary Secretary, engaging in an effort to besmirch the activities and interests of the Opposition in order to try to save his own political hide.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, that is debate, as you well know. I am convinced that this is nothing more than an attempt to undermine a genuine and very difficult task undertaken by people in government and people in the fishing industry.

Fishermen in the commercial sector and the sports sector, people involved in the industry, are meeting even today on a consultative basis in an effort to deal with these very difficult problems. It is my opinion—I am entitled to give it and shall give it—that it is self-evident and obvious that this is nothing but a political game. I challenge the Hon. Members opposite once and for all to show us concrete, positive proposals. As I have said before many times in addressing fishery issues: Fish, gentlemen, or cut bait.

• (1610)

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend, as I said a few moments ago, is well and favourably known to me and is not known for any particular diffidence when it comes to entering into the fray of debate. That is understandable. I do not mind the Hon. Member saying that the Opposition does not have all the answers. However, I do ask that he listen when the Opposition speaks. The Hon. Member suggested that the Opposition has had nothing to say today. I would like to ask him if he heard me discussing the necessity to have an agreed upon data base, that the fact is that hundreds of rivers cannot be analysed because of the lack of data base. Did the Hon. Member not hear me say that it was fundamental to stop the decline of stocks, to rebuild in order to maximize employment? Did he not hear me say that we had to emphasize habitat protection and enhancement, and include a principle, which I have never heard from his Party, of net gain of habitat so we can really rebuild the stocks?

I have not heard what the real position is of the Government on the common property theory. It keeps turning up in its