

governments make contributions one way or the other as well. But I will look at it with a very open mind.

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FISHERIES

BLOCKADE OF VICTORIA HARBOUR BY SALMON FISHERMEN— REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF RESTRICTIONS

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Of course he will be aware that yesterday there was a blockade of the Victoria Harbour which caused certain disruptions in traffic and that the strike of the fishermen could very easily spread to other ports in the area. This demonstration of anger at the minister's restrictive practices was brought about because American fishermen, on the breakdown of the Canada-United States negotiations, are fishing in Canadian waters and taking young stock in areas where Canadian fishermen are being denied access.

● (1150)

Having been out there for the first—second time, really, since he reassumed office—and having seen the matter on the site, is the minister now prepared to reconsider the decision which he made about gear, about limited access and limited time? This is taking into account the preservation of the salmon stocks, which every Canadian wants to see; but still fishermen have to live. Is he prepared to reconsider the restrictions he has imposed on the fishermen in that area?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, there is a certain amount of misinformation in the hon. member's question. The fact is that we had test fishing on the Canadian part of Swiftsure Bank, and there were fewer juvenile fish than had been assumed, and we did in fact open it so the trollers could fish in that area. We tried to get agreement from the U.S. authorities to close down if there were too many immature fish. We still hope that they might do so, because we would close down if immature fish were too numerous, as any normal fish manager would do.

On the question of the demonstration, I must say that the regulations which were announced last October followed long consultation with the trollers through their representatives, three of whom sit on the ministerial advisory council set up by my predecessor. At the time it was agreed that six gurdies were a wise conservation measure. At the meeting that I had with the same advisory council last week, again the representatives of the majority of the trollers supported the conservation measures we had announced. The consultations were long and exhaustive.

I am really surprised that the hon. member is advocating a change on a measure which was taken strictly on conservation grounds and which, in fact, if we were to back down before this sort of demonstration, would make any pretence to manage the fisheries exactly that, a pretence.

Oral Questions

FINANCIAL POSITION OF FISHERMEN

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): In these consultations the minister is talking about, I wonder whether he was able to take into account the financial structure of the fishermen in the area and, particularly, the high interest rates that they are now having to pay to finance their operations. While conservation is the concern of fishermen across the country, and he should certainly not be charging fishermen with failing to take that into account in their enterprise, there is still the matter of the livelihood of fishermen.

I am wondering whether the minister really did get this information about the six gurdies as opposed to the eight. In light of the current interest rates alone, the fishermen are not able to make their payments. Is he trying to drive them out of business? Is he trying to destroy the industry of the trollers on the west coast? I rather suspect that he is, in favour of the seiners.

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): We offered the trollers what adjustments we thought were reasonable, including the one I have just mentioned, the reopening of Swiftsure as long as there are not excessive numbers of juvenile fish caught. We offered to look at the October fishery, in light of the season, in light of the condition of the stocks, when that time comes. But surely the hon. member is not advocating that we eliminate conservation measures because the interest rate has gone up.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Nor are fishermen.

Mr. LeBlanc: Frankly, if I had to manage a fishery on the basis of fluctuations in the interest rate, then I would really hand in my resignation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: Let's have it today.

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LABOUR RELATIONS

VOYAGEUR BUS LINE STRIKE—REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF MEDIATOR

Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I advised the Minister of Labour I would be asking this question this morning, and I notice that he has disappeared. I hope he is not too far away.

My question to the minister concerns the long and protracted strike that is developing at Voyageur Bus Lines. As the minister knows, a strike of a bus line is particularly damaging to middle and lower-income Canadians who cannot afford the luxury of air transportation. Also, a small number of communities have become isolated as a result of this strike. Will the minister appoint a mediator to look into this? I have been advised that the unions would like this type of service at this time.