

he does not know who will follow him, and we may very well end up with a minister of the environment who has no interest in the fisheries of Canada and who has not been remotely connected with them. Such a minister might very well devote his time to those provisions of the act dealing with the environment and the new air pollution bill which the minister introduced a few days ago, or to the Canada Water Act and all the additional legislation which will be introduced under the aegis of the proposed new department.

In his introductory remarks in the debate on second reading the minister suggested that the fisheries interests will be protected by a division of the new department to be designated as, I think, the Canadian fisheries service. This would place the special responsibilities of fisheries in the same category as the Canadian Wildlife Service, the meteorological service, the water section, now under the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and parts of the environmental legislation currently under the Department of National Health and Welfare. By his suggestion the minister is inadvertently—I say inadvertently because this certainly is not his intention and I am not placing that construction on what he said—downgrading the department over which he has had responsibility since this Parliament convened 2½ years ago.

I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, and I repeat, that the minister has dedicated himself to his responsibilities as Minister of Fisheries and Forestry. He has done a good job and has introduced new policies and given a new lease of life to the fishing industry of Canada. As a consequence he has made a reputation for himself in the government of Canada. I suggest to him that he is being patently unfair to the department over which he has presided and which has been so good to him. I am suggesting that the minister is selling out to the cabinet in this instance, because I believe the minister subscribes to the view that we should retain the name "fisheries" in the title of the new department. I believe he subscribes to that view because he is genuinely interested in ensuring for all time that this important aspect of the new department will receive the attention it deserves from whoever presides over it in the future.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Perhaps that is why the minister has been reluctant to enter the debate. I think it is very significant, Mr. Chairman, that members opposite, including the minister's new parliamentary secretary who comes from a fishing constituency in New Brunswick, have failed to get to their feet. It is also significant that the hon. member for Westmorland-Kent, who has the honour to be chairman of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, has failed to participate in this debate. I think it is significant, too, that the hon. member for Burnaby-Richmond has not risen to his feet to participate in this debate.

Mr. Corbin: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The hon. member for Westmorland-Kent is sick in bed. That is why he cannot be in the House tonight.

Government Organization Act, 1970

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, I apologize and I hope the hon. member for Westmorland-Kent will soon recover and be back on his feet so that he can return to the House and participate in this debate and give us the advantage of his great knowledge. However it would appear that the parliamentary secretary is in exceptionally good health tonight, so what excuse does he have for not participating in this debate? I am also surprised that the independently-minded member for Esquimalt-Saanich has not risen to his feet and seen fit to be present at the examination of this bill in committee. He has great responsibilities and great interest in fisheries, coming as he does from one of the fishing constituencies of British Columbia.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Mr. Marchand (Kamloops-Cariboo): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Since the hon. member seems to be taking a roll-call I would mention that the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich is in Washington participating in public hearings on the important question of transporting oil in tankers from Alaska to parts of the United States.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich is a very important member of the House; that is very obvious. I think we ought to consider standing this clause of the bill until he is back in the House.

An hon. Member: What else is new?

Mr. McGrath: In all fairness, I know that the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich would wish to participate in the debate. I therefore think that later this day consideration should be given to standing this part of the bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Chairman, it is interesting to see the kind of fish that you can catch with so little bait. It is intriguing. Perhaps I ought to make one more cast. I now refer to that distinguished young member for Gloucester.

An hon. Member: He is here.

Mr. McGrath: He has great interest in this bill; I know how important are the Department of Fisheries and the fishing industry to his constituency. It strikes me as very strange that he has failed to speak either for or against this amendment. Perhaps before the evening is over he will honour us with a few remarks. Last, and by no means least, is the distinguished former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry. I am sorry that I do not see him in the chamber.

Mr. Whelan: I am here.

Mr. McGrath: I beg your pardon; I see the honourable and distinguished former parliamentary secretary in his seat.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: I hope that he, too, will honour us with a few words, because the Department of Fisheries was very