

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

of Northern Affairs and National Resources the following question:

Would the minister inform the house what action he has taken to deal with this latest and graphic example of the plundering of Canadian natural resources by our United States neighbours?

My question was based on an article that appeared in *Maclean's* magazine of October 17, which was brought to my attention by two or three people who are very interested in this subject, and as a person who has been a practising conservationist for over 50 years I said I would bring the matter to the attention of the minister. This article is rather disturbing. It is entitled: "How Wealthy Sportsmen Are Plundering Our Last Frontier". It goes on to say:

Right now, Tree river is the hottest spot in North America for the spare no expense angler. It's also the most fiercely abused. As such, it's a shameful symbol of what we're allowing to happen to our fastest growing Arctic industry.

The article is very interesting indeed and I wish to quote a paragraph or two which particularly concerned the people who brought this matter to my attention. On page 40 of the magazine I read the following:

Last June, Donald Snowden, then chief of northern affairs' industrial division, tried to rescue sport fishing in the territories from its own success. He called meetings in Edmonton, among camp operators, bush pilots and fisheries experts, to discuss conservation.

The article also contains these words:

How soon will time run out for the char in the Tree river? The fisheries research board said last spring that, the way things were going up till then, there would be no more char in the Tree by the end of next summer. And an anonymous northern affairs official reported to his superiors that unless some order and some restraint were introduced to sport fishing throughout the territories, "We can expect a peak of frantic, competitive development passing from area to area and from lake to lake and from river to river with little left in its wake except abandoned buildings and campsites."

There are other paragraphs in this article in a similar vein. In any event, after reading it through very carefully, Mr. Speaker, I am of the opinion that this is a question that should receive the serious consideration of the minister. I ask him these two particular questions: I presume that as a result of my questions on Friday he has read the article and made some inquiries. My questions are, first, is this article substantially correct in its outline of the situation to which I have referred? If so, what action is the minister

taking to protect our valuable fish resources in the north?

Hon. Arthur Laing (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of the article here. As my hon. friend has said, it starts on page 19 and goes over to page 38. I want to remind him that this is a fish story. As is the case with most fish stories, a certain amount of exaggeration is traditional and even permissible. Since we are endeavouring to develop the tourist business in the Northwest Territories, I am not too sad about it. The article relates to one small area, the Tree river which is a river flowing into the Great Bear lake, an area of about 11,000 square miles. Due to the means of transport by which fishermen can go in, the fishing camps are concentrated. One of the camps sustains 55 anglers at a time, so there is a tendency to fish out that particular area.

Dealing with the Tree area, I want to assure the hon. member that this was brought to my attention last January when I was in the United States. I picked up a very beautiful piece of literature showing a number of United States citizens holding up large fish they had obtained from Great Slave lake. Across the bottom of it was written, "We guarantee you 300 pounds of fish a day." I took this matter up with my officers at once. I am assured by them that most of the things that are written here are now past tense, because the operators themselves are fully conscious of what this would mean to them in the end. They have gotten together. In addition, the R.C.M.P. have decided to reduce the take of char out of the Tree river down to two tons for their dogs. They have been taking more than this. I can assure the hon. member, therefore, we are aware of the situation.

The control of the fishery is in the hands of the fisheries department. The R.C.M.P. and our wardens, in these very remote areas are in control of the management of the resources. The article relates to one or two very localized areas. We think and hope there are many fishing areas on Great Bear lake and we look toward a tremendous increase in tourism in that area. I can assure my hon. friend that the article is a little bit overdone, but from our point of view probably designed to attract a large number of visitors next year. A number of Canadians of course are going in. This is expensive fishing. I believe it costs \$760 or \$900 round trip from Edmonton, with seven days of fishing. We are try-