

Fisheries Improvement Loans Act

● (10:50 a.m.)

I rise simply to say that I did not take part in the discussion of the point of order earlier because it seemed to me it was in good hands, and Your Honour has our confidence. I should like to say, now, that the motion to change the title of the bill would, if passed, I suggest, put us in a somewhat ridiculous position. The text of the bill makes no reference to a previous act of this session; it makes no reference to what was Bill C-151, and what is now chapter something or other. Rather, the text of this bill refers to the original statute. It would be odd if we were to amend the title to make it read "An Act to Amend an Act of the Present Session Intituled An Act to Amend the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act" and then went on to pass a bill which does not do this at all, but which amends provisions of the original act. I think this would look somewhat strange. The Law Officers of the Crown and the drafting officers would have quite a time trying to sort it out.

The point of order raised originally by the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) was a legitimate one, but since Your Honour ruled the way you did it seems we have no option but to reject this motion.

Motion (Mr. Crouse) negatived.

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries) moved:

That Bill C-195, an act to amend the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act, as reported (without amendment) from The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry on June 10, 1969, be concurred in.

Motion (for concurrence) agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the said bill be read the third time?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Now, by leave.

Mr. Davis moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, you extended an invitation to us to comment at this stage on certain aspects of the bill, both with regard to its contents and its deficiencies. I had hoped to be able to move during the report stage on behalf of my hon. friend from Skeena (Mr. Howard) the addition of what he and I consider to be a very necessary feature, that is, the extension of the coverage provided in this measure so as to permit fishermen to refinance debts previously incurred—

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

Mr. McGrath: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member is now referring to an amendment on which Your Honour has already ruled and I submit he is out of order.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) will appreciate that the amendments were ruled out of order only because they could not be moved at the report stage. This does not mean that the subject matter might not be discussed on third reading. Indeed, I made a point of suggesting to hon. members that they might wish to make their points on third reading.

Mr. Barnett: I certainly have no desire to debate the amendment which Your Honour has ruled out of order but I did understand I might make reference to the subject matter.

I was on the point of referring to the provision in the legislation which spells out the purposes for which fishermen can borrow money. Generally speaking they include the purchase or construction of fishing vessels, the purchase of major equipment, major repairs or overhaul of fishing vessel engines, and the purchase of certain shore installations associated with the fishing industry.

The suggestion put forward by my hon. friend from Skeena was that, while this legislation is open, the bill should remedy what has long been a serious deficiency, namely that no provision has been made for fishermen to convert loans secured previously from other sources into insured loans under the terms of the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act. I am sure anyone who is familiar with boat financing on the west coast recognizes that this is an important matter, because over the years in the absence of any more adequate arrangement for the financing of fishing vessels and equipment fishermen have made various borrowing arrangements with the fishing companies.

The result is that over the years many fishermen have become captives of the large fishing companies. They have never really acquired ownership of their vessels and equipment or been able to operate as independent fishermen, with the freedom to sell their catch to any buyers they might choose. It is more important than ever at this time to take steps to enable fishermen to achieve a greater measure of financial independence vis-à-vis the fishing companies; bearing in mind the program of licensing of fishing vessels which the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) has put into effect. I suggest there is an opportunity now for the minister, and