

Coastal Fisheries Protection Act

ment to action which will provide better protection for our fishing resources than has heretofore been the case.

Mr. David Anderson (Esquimalt-Saanich): Just a brief word, Mr. Speaker, to endorse this bill. It is a small bill and a small change to the act—it totals only three lines—for the provisioning, servicing and repair of vessels which are maintaining a foreign fishing fleet at sea. It is a very good step in the right direction, small though it is, and it must obviously be followed by more legislation and completion of the base lines system.

This bill is a good one and I would not have spoken on it had it not been for the amendment proposed by the spokesman for the Conservative Party, the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse). I think it would be unwise for this House to accept that amendment. The suggestion that the Lieutenant Governor in Council of any province should decide whether foreign vessels should come into the ports of a particular province could lead to a situation where the merchants in towns such as St. John's, Halifax or Lunenburg, could say, "Let us be the first to do this, because the whole foreign fleet will come here and we will have a big trade with the foreign fleet and the maintenance vessels."

This could lead to exactly the type of situation we are trying to avoid, that is, having these foreign fleets make use of Canadian port facilities to keep their vessels operating in areas off the Canadian coast. That is what we are trying to get away from. The amendment proposed would completely negate the bill and lead to competition between Maritime provinces for this trade. It would do nothing to improve the situation of Canadian fishermen, although it might do something for the merchants of the ports. I wished to speak only on that point, and I now resume my seat.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, at the opening of his remarks the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) courteously mentioned Mr. Ozere. This gentleman is retiring from service with the Department of Fisheries this year, in which he served two years past the normal 25-year work span of most people. In other words, he was 65 a couple of years ago, and we kept him on. I hope we will be able to rely on his services from time to time in the future, because they have been invaluable.

Mr. Ozere is a quiet man, an effective man who has gained the respect not only of officials in Ottawa, particularly those in the Department of External Affairs, but also abroad

where he is well known in the fisheries circles of the world. He has had a hand in the writing of our fisheries laws and has been an effective fighter for Canadian fishermen. I can assure the House that he still has an important influence on our deliberations and on our thinking in relation to the fishing limits of Canada and our relationships with other countries, the protection of our resources, and so on.

I should like to refer briefly to the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act amendment which is before the House. This amendment includes fishing supply vessels under the definition of fishing vessels, so that the Minister of Fisheries can at his discretion limit their entry into Canadian ports. In other words, the minister will be able to exclude supply vessels of large fishing fleets from our ports if to do so is consistent with national fisheries policy.

As I have stated in the House, and I repeat, the government does not intend to exclude foreign fishing vessels of any kind, including supply vessels, from ports in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. In other words, they will be able to come and go from our ports on the east coast, the principal ones they have been visiting over the years.

The main reason for continuing to service the long-distance fishing fleet of other countries in this way is that if we were to close the ports of St. John's, Newfoundland, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, they would go to St. Pierre and Miquelon, at the French Islands immediately south of Newfoundland and in the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

I have been interested in the position taken so far by the members of the Official Opposition. The remarks in the House and in committee leave me with the impression that they are mainly concerned with the business done by the tradesmen, by the retail outlets and the wholesalers in our two principal ports of St. John's and Halifax. They have yet to give voice to the interests of the Canadian fishermen on the east coast.

Mr. McGrath: That is not true, and it is not fair.

Mr. Davis: I am sure the members of the opposition now awakened to their omission will find, if they talk to our fishermen—particularly the inshore fishermen in their own ridings—that to a man they are opposed to the servicing of big fishing fleets; they are opposed to helping them cut their costs by making food, fuel and other supplies available