

Government Orders

• (1550)

[English]

FISHERIES ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Mary Collins (for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans) moved that Bill C-74, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and to amend the Criminal Code in consequence thereof be read the third time and passed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Debate.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Madam Speaker, I was a little hesitant in rising, not because I lack enthusiasm for this marvellous bill, Bill C-74, but because I fully thought that, on third reading, my friend from St. John's East or the Minister of Fisheries would have talked to the House at least for a few minutes about their hopes as to what the bill will achieve.

Mr. Reid: I will. I will, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Simmons: He promises that in time he will do that, so I shall forge on with my few remarks on this bill.

The basic premise of this bill is that it ought to improve fish stocks through tougher enforcement measures. The member agrees to that. I think I have his attention. We are on the same wave length as to what the bill ought to do.

Mr. Reid: Cheek to cheek.

Mr. Simmons: We are also cheek to cheek, as he says, on the matter of the need for such tougher measures, because those who stay within the law on this issue have nothing to fear.

The people who this bill goes after, in effect, are those who come into our waters illegally and engage in all kinds of illegal activity, from overfishing to dumping valuable fish resource, to polluting the ocean, and to using it as a dumping ground wilfully and without regard for its consequences and damage to fish habitat and the environment in general terms. These are the people we are after.

We can name them in terms of categories. By and large, they are the fishermen from metropolitan France,

Portugal, and Spain. I have carefully said metropolitan France because I want to distinguish between the fishermen from St. Malo and other parts of metropolitan France, on one hand, and those from St. Pierre and Miquelon on the other.

That latter group of fishermen does not have a voice in the House because they do not belong to this country. But it should be said in passing that in many respects they are our brothers and sisters of the fishery. When we suffer in terms of loss of resource or depleted resource, they suffer. I stand to be corrected, but I do not know of any blatant examples involving the fishermen of St. Pierre and Miquelon. I know of many blatant examples of pollution and overfishing, going over many years, involving fishermen from St. Malo and other parts of metropolitan France.

Maybe, in passing, I might mention the relationship that has grown up over the years between the fishermen of St. Pierre and Miquelon, on the one hand, and the people of the south coast of Newfoundland on the other. For example, there are many cases of intermarriage between people from places such as Grand Bank, Point May, Lamaline, and those communities directly facing St. Pierre and Miquelon. I go to St. Pierre as often as possible, usually once or twice a year, to practise my French, Madam Speaker—

Mr. Reid: Oh, oh.

[Translation]

Mr. Simmons: Ah, my friend from St. John's East can laugh.

[English]

Perhaps he has much justification for laughing at that idea, but he and I have a hope that one day we will be able to speak to our fellow Canadians in either of the two official languages.

I have a particular immediate aspiration in that about 4,000 or 5,000 of my constituents are French-speaking people whose first tongue is French. So, the onus is on me to get on with the task of being able to speak the other language. I have made a start. My Christmas cards this year, for the first time, are in both official languages. We are getting there very, very slowly—but I digress.

Mr. Brewin: Do you translate yourself?