

We are all aware of the tremendous importance of the fishing industry to Canada. Any measure of program directed toward enhancing the industry, whether on the east coast, the west coast, or in the areas in between, will receive unqualified support.

● (9:30 p.m.)

I think back, Mr. Chairman, to former years when there was a real measure of co-operation on a non-partisan basis when it came to a consideration of fisheries problems. That spirit of co-operation was characteristic of the approach which all members took, because they realized the problems we faced would not be solved by a political approach, but that they would be solved when we were able to co-operate in bringing in what we believed were effective and adequate measures for the solution of our problems. It almost seems as though now a new era has dawned; we have departed from that attitude of co-operation and have moved into an area of criticism, which I think is doing and will do a disservice to the entire industry.

The hon. member for Comox-Alberni, supported by his colleague for Skeena, went to considerable length in an effort to downgrade the government of his own province. It is remarkable that there are those in this house who seem to take a great delight in doing this for political purposes and political motives; but it is unfortunate in a debate such as this that we would resort to tactics of this kind. I wish to assure the Minister of Fisheries, you Mr. Chairman, and all members of this house, that the government of British Columbia is actively concerned in all phases of the British Columbia economy and in the welfare of all its people. I wonder whether it could be that an election campaign is in the offing in British Columbia, and that this is part of the program.

Mr. Howard: I did not know that.

Mr. Patterson: It may be the take-off for an election campaign. Several years ago I was invited to a non-partisan meeting; it was not a political meeting at all, but rather was a meeting called by the fisheries organizations. They had representatives from the various political parties and it was during an election campaign. The candidates there used it for a political platform. I should like to assure all concerned that it was not very effective in those days; in fact it backfired.

I do not believe, Mr. Chairman, that the problems which face the fishing industry in British Columbia, or in any other part of

Commercial Fisheries Development

Canada for that matter, will be solved by political criticisms or innuendos. They will be solved by an organized and constant effort on the part of all concerned to find a solution to the problems which face us.

Mr. Howard: Would you permit a question?

Mr. Patterson: Certainly.

Mr. Howard: The hon. member has permitted me to ask a question, Mr. Chairman. I am sure we all want to work in a spirit of co-operation; that is our desire, our intention and our hope. If we have erred as the hon. member indicates, I wonder, in order to get us back on the right track, would he detail for us what the provincial government has done in recent years to assist the fishing industry in British Columbia?

Mr. Patterson: In past years the fisheries affairs have been under the direction of another department, and in fact are still at the present time. I believe, however, we must recognize this fact, that on the Pacific coast the major responsibility for activities in respect of the fisheries is under the jurisdiction of the federal government. In fact, a study of the regulations and of the whole picture, as it affects the Pacific fishery, points out this fact, that the federal government has the major responsibility in the field of fisheries. I do know that the minister under whose jurisdiction the fisheries fall, so far as the provincial responsibility is concerned, is vitally interested in this matter. I do know also that a great deal of attention and thought is being given to it and, just as British Columbia has faced and solved its problems in many other phases of activity, so I know they are going to face this realistically and, so far as possible within the provincial jurisdiction, meet their responsibilities and cooperate with the federal government in its efforts to solve the problems of development, the problems of conservation, the problems of marketing, and every other type of problem with which we are faced on the Pacific coast.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I felt I would be remiss tonight if I failed to make these few brief observations. I wish to say again, in spite of what the hon. member for Saint John-Albert said about the Atlantic salmon being tops so far as the fish of Canada are concerned, that I do not agree with him altogether, because through my constituency flows the mighty Fraser river, one of the great salmon fishery rivers of the continent and of the world. I should like to say it is