

*Government Orders*

cause of the cold, but also because it is hard to haul the timber out.

• (1605)

Of course, we could use heavy equipment, but it gets expensive for businessmen to clear bush roads every time there is some timber to haul out whereas, during the summertime, roads are always open and accessible. Springtime conditions are no better. It is hard to work in the bush when the snow is melting. When you are using a chain saw, you need to have your two feet on solid ground. There is also the haulage problem, which can be serious in the spring.

I have already dealt with fisheries, but I could add the example of lobster fishing. The data on resource preservation show that, for as long as I can remember, at least since the beginning of the 1970s, lobster fishing has been limited to ten weeks. The resource itself makes it impossible to fish for a longer period. Around the Gaspé Peninsula, they go lobster fishing from Mother's Day to the beginning of July. In Nova-Scotia, they go a bit later. For example, some areas are still open around Nova Scotia. However, the resource is subject to a limit of ten weeks.

How can we find a way for these people, who have a highly specialized job, but one which does not provide them work for any longer than that, to continue to earn a living? In the past, they used to rely on cod fishing, but there is no more cod to be caught. We worked with these groups in order to create other projects for them to start fishing other species and diversify, but it is not an easy task. The first years when you start working under a federal program made mostly for shore workers, there are no incentives that would allow for a lucrative kind of fishing to emerge, such as soupfin shark, or spiny dogfish as we call it in my region.

However, I will admit this is a remarkable effort and I know the people opposite in the government co-operated. I hope we will get the same kind of co-operation next year and the following years. The Gaspé Peninsula needs tools like this. It is not because we did not reach the objective this year that we should forgo the experience next year. On the contrary, we should profit from what we have learned this year.

I am going from one subject to another, but I would like to mention some other points. First, I am somewhat moved by this because life in that region flows with the seasons. We need this form of support. If we want to do without social programs like unemployment insurance, the question is: Are you people listening to us this afternoon willing to pay two, three, four times what you are paying now for your seafood? Maybe you are, maybe not. One thing is certain, we will have to be given time. What we want are the tools to give more responsibility to people in the industry. Marketing tools, of course, but also tools to clean up the industry, in particular as regards incidental captures.

Last spring I attended hearings where I heard a number of groups from the Atlantic region. Whether they were from Quebec, Nova Scotia or Newfoundland, people wanted to be part of the discussions on their future. People wanted to be consulted. More than that, they wanted to be able to intervene locally on matters of interest to them. Unfortunately, this is not possible under the present system.

I wish to draw the attention of the Minister of Human Resources to the fact that a debate on this subject is forthcoming. Last week, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans recognized that we would have to review the whole fisheries administration in Canada. I congratulate him for acknowledging that we have a problem. I also let him know that the province of Quebec had submitted a project that might solve the problem. He told me that, naturally, he had to consult the other provinces. During the next few weeks I will follow up on that, to make sure that the minister has, indeed, started discussions with his counterparts and that officials of the two levels of government are doing the necessary groundwork. It is most important.

• (1610)

I would like to go back to what my constituents said because it touched on all of this. They said: "We do not understand this reform. We are in dire straights, and we would like the government to help the poorest members of society, to give us the necessary tools to break this vicious circle". Before, it used to be called the 10/42, from now on it will be the 12/38. The government is tightening eligibility, increasing the number of work weeks, while shortening the benefit period. It is very disappointing for people.

People would like to have the tools to take care of themselves. But the government is not providing them. With respect to the unemployment rate in the Gaspé Peninsula, the government came to the brilliant conclusion that we do not have too many people out of work, we have too many people for the number of jobs available.

The second point which really irks people is the matter of employability. A fisherman told me this: "In our village, with a population of 200 to 300, should everyone become a welder?" It does not make any sense to retrain some 30 fishermen to all become welders. What I want to point out with this story is the fact that we need the tools to modify the economic structure of our regions.

We will not be able to transform the Gaspé Peninsula overnight into something like Montreal. Montreal also has its share of problems. The unemployment rate in this city is somewhere around 13 per cent, I believe. People are warning me that if this reform goes any further, it will trigger an exodus. Where will people go, if they have to leave an area where the unemployment rate is now 17 per cent to go to an area where it is 13 per cent? It is robbing Peter to pay Paul.