

Fisheries Act

matter; the judge challenged the constitutionality. I am agreeable that these changes be made, frankly, with the consultation process.

Let us try and institute an industry consultation process so that the Department cannot do anything on the ground of socio-economic reasons. I do not think the Minister should take a reference on the constitutionality of the Fisheries Act. That would open up more problems. It is only a decision on an injunction, and I do not think he has to do that. I am replying to the debate I had with the Minister the other day. I hope he will read it in *Hansard*. In conclusion, our position is—

[*Translation*]

—simply to hold consultations with all groups involved in fisheries here on the West Coast and on Canada's East Coast.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member a question. There is a problem which the Hon. Member recognizes as far as stock availability is concerned in practically every species off the British Columbia coast. He said that he is in agreement with the federal Government making decisions on socio-economic grounds and not just on the grounds of conservation and protection. We are into a new area here.

For purposes of argument, suppose there were five groups of salmon left over which could be caught off the British Columbia coast. Would the hon. gentleman allocate one to the trollers, one to the gillnetters, one to the seiners, one to the sports fishermen and one to the native population? That is what we are getting down to here. We are getting down to the allocation of a resource among user groups because there is not enough of that resource.

● (1230)

I do not know whether or not the question I put to the Hon. Member is unfair. He is not a Government Member. I just wonder about his opinion. Should each user group get an equal share of the resource or, when we get to the point where there is practically nothing left, which one do we erase? Do we erase the sports fishermen, the trollers, the seiners, the gillnetters? I would like the hon. gentleman to comment on that.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, hopefully we do not erase anyone and we do enhance the stock. This must be done through a consultation process with some fairness and equity in its management. I would ask the Hon. Member to be careful about how he quotes me. I said that the use of the phrase "social and economic terms" regarding allocation is very wide and that I have some real concerns about that which I would like to raise in committee.

Second, I said that if the resource must be allocated on the basis of the social and economic terms, then it must be done with safeguards, and the safeguard I suggested was to have the user groups decide co-operatively what should be done rather than have a distant Fisheries Department decide what should

be done. I also said that I recognize that that is not easy. The different groups have different interests and they have a history of arguing among themselves because they have different interests. I think I cited the suggestion of Jack Nichol which is that a Pacific fisheries development board be utilized in which all these groups could take part and have some say in the allocations.

I am optimistic. Everyone on the west coast recognizes that we have a resource that is dwindling. We also recognize that we need a fishing industry. Just as it is for those in the great province of Newfoundland, fishing is a part of the culture of those of us from British Columbia. Where would the province be without its salmon? I represent the only riding on the coast of British Columbia that does not border on the ocean and even I feel fishing and fishermen are very much a part of our culture on the coast.

While the fishermen may have conflicts, they are not stupid. They understand that they must work together and they will work together. Our Party has been suggesting that the resource be allocated over all by the Department but with built-in consultation with the user groups. I think that makes a lot of sense.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be unfair to the hon. gentleman. After all, he is not a Government Member. However, perhaps his Party does have a view on this question. I would like to repeat the question and narrow it down.

Suppose there was not enough of the resource for all of the user groups.

Mr. Keeper: As a result of Liberal mismanagement?

Mr. Baker: The Hon. Member says that is the result of Liberal mismanagement. At this point in time, it does not matter who mismanaged the fishery; we have a problem on our hands. I would like to have an indication of the New Democratic Party's position on this important question.

Narrowing the question down further, if there is not enough of the resource left to maintain the user groups, would the Hon. Member and his Party advocate discontinuing the sports fishery? Does he regard the commercial fishery to be of more importance than the sports fishery in salmon, for example? I really would like to receive an answer to the question but I know that the hon. gentleman does not have to answer the question. Perhaps he does have some views on the issue of the sports fishermen versus the commercial fishermen when very little of that resource is left. Would he advocate a discontinuance of the commercial fishery in favour of the sports fishery?

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why Liberal Members are so negative about this matter. Perhaps it is because of their years of mismanagement of the fishery. As I told the Hon. Member, I am not negative. He asked me what I would do if I were, God forbid, Minister of Fisheries of the country. I would concentrate on things like salmon enhancement on a huge scale. I would look at some of the things that are being done in Europe in the fish farming sector. I would