

matters, saying that he is not quite sure. At least that is the impression he left—perhaps it was the wrong impression he left inadvertently—I am not sure who is at fault; anyway there was no agreement.

Let us be very clear. A treaty was signed. We have been unable up to this point to get the United States to ratify that treaty.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Agreed.

Mr. Tobin: Having said that, I am delighted to take part in this debate and to indicate my support for the efforts by the Government, by the Minister and by the people in the Department and all those who have tried to grapple with the difficult and complex problems of the Pacific fishery. More than simply saying I support the Minister and I support the Government, particularly saying that I support the Government—a sort of faceless institution—let me say that I support and have a great deal of empathy for all those people in the industry, in the unions, the fishermen, both commercial and sport, and native people and all those involved. I have a lot of empathy with the very difficult questions that confront them. We have to recognize that the salmon stock on the West Coast of Canada is currently overfished. We must all recognize that each of the players that I have named are accessing themselves to that stock. It is very difficult to say who should take less. It is very difficult to say who should pack up and leave so that first, and this is the first priority, the stock survives, and second, those who do remain to participate in the commercial end can have an economically viable livelihood.

I thought today that I would be very pleased to have the opportunity to listen to Members of the Opposition outline and present not just concrete solutions but well thought out and sincere propositions. I am sure the Minister would have found that kind of exercise useful. Perhaps other Members who follow me in the Opposition will break new ground today and actually reveal to the House some sign that they are not totally void of policy. I say that with respect. I hope they will indicate clearly to the House precisely where they stand on this very difficult, important policy issue.

To help succeeding Opposition speakers and to help focus their minds I would like to pose a number of questions to the Opposition Members. I am sure they would agree that the answers to this very question lie at the very heart of any effort to make certain that the valuable salmon resource of the West Coast is preserved for all time and is used to the best advantage for the benefit of all Canadians, particularly those living in British Columbia. My questions are simple and straightforward. As I indicated earlier, the answers are very difficult to find but we are attempting to find them. Do Hon. Members opposite agree with the Government that conservation and rehabilitation of the salmon resource comes first? Do they agree that efforts to reverse the decline in salmon stocks must be made now and that it is the statutory responsibility of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané) to take the management steps necessary to ensure the decline is halted and reserved? Does the Opposition agree that in discussing

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allocation of the right to catch salmon, we are only talking about allocation of fish which are surplus to reproductive requirements, and that it is the duty of fisheries managers to ensure the fishing industry is not subsidized by fish which are beyond that surplus, thereby making inevitable the continued decline in the resource?

• (1600)

Does the Opposition agree that in allocating access to those salmon which are surplus to spawning requirements, the legitimate rights of native people to fish for food has first call on the salmon resource? Do they agree that once the native fishery priority has been met, the remaining allowable catch should be allocated on the basis of maximum return both to the owners of the fish, that is the people of Canada, and to the industry which surrounds the catching effort?

If they agree that fishing and the fishing industry must have a rational economic basis, do they also understand that while the commercial fishing sector creates direct employment of about 4,200 person years based on 91 per cent of the catch, the industry, which now surrounds the sport fishery, by comparison creates about 2,430 person years of employment with only 4 per cent of the catch?

If they agree with that data, would they undertake to support the position of the Minister that the West Coast sport fishery must be given serious and sober consideration in these matters and discussions so that British Columbia and Canada can take advantage of the enormous economic opportunity which that fishery offers?

Let me pose in addition some questions to Hon. Members opposite about the commercial fishery. Do they agree with the Pearce Commission that the West Coast commercial salmon fleet ought to be reduced in size and fishing power through government intervention? Do they support Dr. Pearce's proposal of a buy-back in the order of 50 per cent? If they do not, will they tell us what they consider to be the appropriate number? Are they prepared today, since they requested this debate, to put on the table concrete measures to deal with the overcapacity of the fleet? Will their measures provide relief to hard pressed fishermen or simply an unmitigated bail-out of financial institutions?

I am sure Hon. Members opposite are taking notes of all these questions so that they can provide detailed answers to each and every one of them. I will not hold my breath, however.

I should like to focus on the questions of our native people in the commercial fishery. Does the Opposition share the Government's belief that the percentage decline in native participation in the commercial fishery must be reversed? Are they prepared to put on the table any of the concrete proposals the Minister has invited, including proposals to meet the needs of coastal native communities or to tell us how they would deal with these Canadians for whom fishing has been a way of life since before the advent of non-native settlers in that part of Canada?