

### *Supply*

As I reflect on what I have heard here today, both from sitting in the House and watching on the monitor in my office, there are five points that strike me and I would like to share them with you.

The first point is related to the facts, not interpretation, not political rhetoric, not speeches, not political will, but the state of affairs as it exists today.

The second point I am struck with is the response of the hon. minister of fisheries. His response on what could be done, what should be done, what might be done, and in particular why he did not feel that he could vote for this motion. I will comment on that in a few moments.

The third aspect that I was struck with is the talk that is going on, and I have related to what has happened, what has been the result of all this.

The fourth aspect is the tone of the presentations in the House itself.

The final thing is, where are we after all is said and done?

Let me start with the very brief facts, Mr. Speaker. Before I do that I want to make some definitions clear. I am talking about foreign overfishing outside the 200-mile economic zone of Canada. I am talking about not just northern cod. I am talking mostly about cod, but I am talking about groundfish as well that are processed in Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada. I am talking about the nose and tail of the bank, which are those two parts outside our economic zone.

The nose, which is like a segment of a circle, is about 60 miles long and the furthest part of the circle comes out to about 40 miles; the tail is about 100 miles long and the segment goes out to a maximum of about 60 miles. It is not a very large part of the ocean, not a very large part of the continental shelf. But large enough, that in the spring of this year it holds 10 per cent of the biomass of cod in that area. In previous years on record it was 5 per cent, and in one year it doubled.

Whatever is happening there, a lot of fish are hanging out there. And it is very important that we zero in on this. This is what we are doing today.

The fact of the matter is that plants are closing, trawlers are being tied up, inshore fishermen have their nets empty and people are without work. The fact of the matter is that foreigners are illegally catching more and

Atlantic Canadians are legally catching less. The fact of the matter is that if we had the 380 million pounds of fish that was caught by foreigners last year we would be able to open all the fish plants that were closed in Atlantic Canada.

The fact of the matter is that the fishing industry is on the verge of decimation. The fact of the matter is that people are being alarmed, there is a human face on this. Those are the facts. I think most of that was put on the record by the hon. member for Burin—St. George's who spoke very eloquently on the subject.

The second point that I was impressed with today was the response of the hon. minister of fisheries. I thought he gave a fairly good statesmanlike presentation, but certain parts of it had what I would call "statesmanlike weasel-wording". The minister acknowledged, in my mind—this is my interpretation of what he had to say—that something could be done about this. But he seemed to believe that the timing of it was more important than the principle. He gave us a litany of what has been done. He also said that while he seemed to like the motion, that because it was a non-confidence motion he believed that he would not be able to vote for it, or would not be able to advise his colleagues to vote for it. The minister of fisheries has been around this place longer than I have been and he knows that with the stroke of a pen or an amendment this can change. So I do not buy that, quite frankly.

• (1310)

I am saying that this is a motion which will allow his government to put in place action to stop this problem and put an end to all that is going on, not next year, not in six month's time, but now. Now is when we need the action. The minister has said he believes it can be done. He believes in the principle but he does not believe the time is right.

The third point I want to mention is, what has happened with all this talk, all the litany of things that the minister has spoken about? Nothing. In fact, the more we speak, the more the foreigners overfish illegally. There is a direct proportion to the diplomatic action and the overfishing. This year, 47,000 tonnes of northern cod alone were caught illegally, 40 per cent of what all Canadians caught legally. That is what is happening with the diplomatic talk.