

Atlantic Fisheries Restructuring Act

foundland and Quebec, now have the ability to market products not only in the United States but to expand those markets. They now have the benefit of a provision being incorporated in a Bill of which, if public ownership or a public enterprise becomes successful, we will have to dispose.

This could mean that in super company A or "No FishCan", which is the Nova Scotia aspect, or in "New Fish Can", which is the Newfoundland aspect of this restructuring—

Miss Campbell: That is very good.

Mr. Miller: I have been holding those names for some time. I have heard "FishCan", but that does not sound as good as "New FishCan" and "No FishCan"; I think they are rather catchy.

Mr. Breau: They are better than X, Y and Z.

Mr. Miller: They are better than the terminology in the Kirby task force memorandum. However, public ownership has a role to play in the fishing industry as well as in Canada as a whole. We cannot accept that once the operations of the super companies become profitable, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané) can dispose of it to private ownership. That amendment moved by the Government and supported by the Conservatives could mean that if an individual trawler shows a profit over a year or two, the trawler could be sold. I do not think that was the intention of the Government; at least I hope it was not. We have the possibility now of a company which could really meet the needs of communities in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

The possibilities of the super companies in terms of involving more people in the management structure are very important. The possibilities of the super companies, in co-operation with the federal and provincial Governments in establishing marketing courses through marine colleges or marine colleges and developing new technologies or new techniques in processing and establishing new product lines, will be beneficial. We in the NDP share the concerns expressed by independent fishermen and processors before the committee in terms of their profitability and ability to survive in an industry which may be dominated by one, two or three major companies. We do not see the necessity of super companies eroding the viability of independent processors and fishermen. The co-operation between the new companies and the independents in terms of supporting new market research and trade missions through Europe and some of the developing countries in which there may be a possibility of selling fish products is very important.

● (1650)

We are somewhat amused that this debate seems to have evolved only around the ownership and the privatization some time in the future of a publicly owned corporation. Projections from Price Waterhouse for the corporation indicate that over the next five years it will make something like a \$50 million profit. I think that is very optimistic. For an industry that is currently losing millions of dollars a year, it is optimistic to

think that we will see profits of \$50 million over the next five years simply through restructuring. We would certainly like to see that come to pass, but we have a long struggle ahead of us to bring the Atlantic fishery industry back to profitability, to see that fishermen can enjoy collective bargaining and have increased prices for the product delivered to the dock and to the plant and to see that the shore workers have some involvement in the management and production of that fishery.

In this instance, Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to support a Bill which is radically different from the Bill for which we indicated support in the past. We think that it is a necessary Bill, but we are not prepared to support a Bill that sees the privatization of a company which has not been able to prove itself to Atlantic Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, when I spoke in the House on second reading of Bill C-170, I said there was a problem with the Government's general orientation with respect to fisheries. Although the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry held a number of sittings to examine the Bill, there was nothing in the proceedings of this Committee that could convince me the approach taken by the Government at the beginning of the so-called Atlantic fisheries crisis, that is, when the Kirby Commission was set up in January 1982 or perhaps December 1981 . . . Up to now, the result has been, in terms of restructuring, an agreement on restructuring with the Province of Newfoundland, an agreement in principle with the Province of Nova Scotia and finally, Bill C-170 which is not restructuring anything.

Bill C-170, and this is very important, does not restructure anything as such. What it does is allow the Government to acquire in Section 4 of the Bill, on page 3, and I quote:

—the Minister may, on behalf of Her Majesty,

(a) acquire, hold or dispose of or otherwise deal with shares, debentures or other securities of, or any security interest in, any fishery enterprise;

Although the Government is given other powers, in the main Bill C-170 authorizes the Government to purchase equity in companies but does not provide the basis for concluding a restructuring agreement.

I must say that while we were examining the Bill, I at least managed to get one positive item in this legislation, in Section 6, where it says, and I quote:

6. (1) To carry out the purpose of this Act, the Minister—

—the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané)—

—may, with the approval of the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Finance, on such terms and conditions as the Minister specifies, guarantee the repayment of any portion of the principal and interest owing on any loan made to a fishery enterprise.

The second paragraph of this section provides, and I quote:

(2) The aggregate amount of guarantees given under this section that are outstanding at any one time shall not exceed one hundred million dollars.