

taken today when the hon. member from Newfoundland was discussing it. I think he deserves an apology from some members to your right.

It is high time a minister of fisheries was reinstated in the cabinet so that he will no longer have a conflict of interest as between fisheries and any other department of government, or at least, if there is a conflict of interest, fisheries will have a voice in the halls of government to say, "You may be right, but let's try to find some sort of solution," so that the fishermen can make a living. Let us not just leave them among the rocks and shoals to drown.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to take much of the time of the committee. I enter the discussion only because of the matter that was raised in the House this afternoon, that is, the question of having an opportunity to question the minister. If we cannot do it in the House, the only recourse is to do it on estimates. Canada apparently received an invitation recently to take part, with the United States of America, in the study of the pollution effect of aircraft in the upper atmosphere with particular reference to supersonic aircraft, military and otherwise. Is Canada taking part in this?

**Mr. Davis:** Mr. Chairman, we have in fact received an invitation and we have one man in the department who is quite an expert on this subject. We will be looking at the SST, but essentially in a defensive posture. We have no intention of buying them and we hope we can prevent their flying over Canada.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** I take it from the minister's reply that we have accepted the invitation to study the possibilities of pollution and its dangers in co-operation with the United States authorities?

**Mr. Davis:** No, Mr. Chairman, we have not yet replied whether we would join with the Americans in this study. But if we do, that is the gentleman who would be involved. He has already done some work in this field.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** I raise the matter because of press reports in the major newspapers in the last few days, that pollution of this kind, so the scientists say, could cause as many as 300 deaths per year from cancer, not to mention other aspects. In view of these reports from reputable scientists, Canada should take part, because when supersonic aircraft fly over North America this kind of pollution does not take cognizance of the famous 3,000-mile border between this country and the United States. This stuff can creep into our atmosphere, and in major military exercises of course it does. In view of the real danger of this kind of pollution, I think we ought to take part in this study.

The other matter is one that I tried to raise this afternoon and on other occasions, but this has not been possible because of the short question period. I want to emphasize this again. I am thinking of the great danger to southwestern Canada from the high level of the lakes. Since the Prime Minister was kind enough to tell me this afternoon, in answer to my question, that the Minister of the Environment is designated as chairman of sort of a cabinet subcommittee on the matter, I am addressing my remarks to him.

### Supply

Up to the present time there has been no co-ordination on this matter because so many ministers are involved; the Secretary of State for External Affairs, because he is in charge of foreign affairs and the IJC, the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of Transport, because he controls the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. The latter minister, in reply to a question on this matter the other day in the House, indicated that he would be very happy to extend LIP to allow some local work to be done in the area to protect cottages and permanent residences and to supply emergency materials to keep out the waters.

Recently I had a letter from the minister which was probably written by someone in his office—maybe the minister did not even see it—and it indicated that he was backing out of the undertaking made in the House. This afternoon the Prime Minister asked me if I would suggest something that the Minister of the Environment might do. Rather than write the minister a letter, I am happy to make suggestions now.

First of all, he might persuade his colleague the Minister of Public Works to send engineers to the Canadian shore of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario where the water level has risen four feet. A few feet difference in the water level is important, particularly when there are nasty storms in the Great Lakes and in the straits. Ice piles up and breaks into cottages. One place I would refer to is Long Point Island, where there are three or four thousand summer cottages. In a short while ice will be piling up there as a result of winds and water. Many cottages have been inundated already.

• (2130)

It is unfortunate that these things happen. We must prevent further damage. I think we should have foreseen that this would happen, knowing that the levels of the Great Lakes had risen and that damage could be done. Perhaps the minister will take a number of steps which may help. Let him send engineers from the Department of Public Works to those areas to see what can be done. It is most urgent that we prevent further damage being caused. What has been caused has been caused and the losses are great, but we should prevent further damage.

The best thing to do would be to use a number of people who are unemployed and ask them to work temporarily erecting barricades or piling up sandbags to stop the water, or something like that. It is quite likely that after June or July the waters will recede. The critical period is the time between when the ice goes out, probably in one month or six weeks, and midsummer. If something could be done, it would be very helpful. It is not just a few people who are involved. Probably at least 50 members of this House are involved. That is why I think this is a political matter and it is as important to the government as to the opposition that something be done. I hope the minister will take the urgent steps that are needed. The situation is dangerous.

**Mr. Harney:** Mr. Chairman, I had a good deal of difficulty being elected to this chamber, having tried five times. It is rather odd to be seated at its edge, but I am somewhat uneasy when I have difficulty in being recognized by