

committee to explain his intentions to us? We know that during the election there were some candidates from his Party who roamed the coast of British Columbia promising a salmonid enhancement program. Could he come before the committee to tell us what his intentions are? He criticized a provincial colleague of mine from British Columbia for possibly having a different interpretation of that program and the time frame in which it would operate. If he came before the committee, he could clear those problems up, but it seems he would rather sit here in his ivory tower.

What about the buy-back program? Allocation will be on the basis of the fishing vessel. Who will have fishing vessels and who will not? Is there a buy-back program costing \$100 million or is there not? We have a serious dilemma because we do not know what is doing on in the fishing industry. We do not know what the new directions are. We know there are broken promises, we know this Government is adopting, maintaining and embellishing the sins of the previous Liberal Government in some fishing areas. We know there is some blatant unfairness. What is the Minister going to do to clean up those particular problems?

I raise again the question of moorage fees. There is no way in the world to justify the fact that fishermen on the West coast must have their moorage fees jacked up by 100 per cent when at the same time fishermen in the Province of Prince Edward Island and the Province of Newfoundland pay no fees. It was pointed out in committee by department officials that there are 40,000 fishing vessels in Canada. Some 32,000 of those are registered from Quebec east into Atlantic Canada. About 90 per cent of these vessels do not pay moorage fees, the bulk of which are under 45 feet in length. I see the Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) is in the House. Why is he not screaming from the rooftops for equity and fairness in this matter? We are not advocating that eastern Canadians have their income further diminished. Trying to eke out a living on the East Coast of Canada is just as hard as it is on the West Coast. But why are people in the Government not on their feet telling the Minister to go before the committee to explain why he is doing this or else to get rid of the inequity. Let the people in British Columbia have a fair chance at earning a living. No one is getting rich out there, it is a tough time.

One of the most outrageous things I have ever heard in my life, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the Government is contemplating getting out of the business of supplying insurance for fishing vessels. The Government knows that private companies will not insure all those vessels. It knows that in some cases insurance rates have gone up 100 per cent. Yet the deadline is drawing closer, April 1 is approaching. There are a large number of fishing vessels which, if we believe the Minister's officials, are going to lose their insurance. Yet the Government is going to wait until March 20 before it makes a decision. Someone who needs to go fishing on March 22 will suddenly find his insurance is gone. One of the conditions of the lending institution is that the vessels be insured. When the insurance is gone, the loan is foreclosed, he loses his vessel and the ability

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to earn an income. To go and find an independent insurer, the fishermen will have to pull their boats out of the water, have a marine surveyor come along, assess the boat for insurance purposes and then they have to wait to see whether they will be accepted or rejected.

It is not irresponsible to ask that this Bill be hoisted for six months, Mr. Speaker. Certainly there are other options. User groups want it postponed until we get the guidelines. The House wants the Minister to appear before the committee to tell us what the over-all game plan is. Surely that is not too hard to do in respect of the Estimates and the annual report, just out of courtesy to the committee. Fishermen are facing very serious deadlines with regard to moorage and insurance which will affect their livelihoods. The Minister has an obligation to tell them what is happening.

● (1140)

I would suggest that my language was certainly harsh. But the Minister knows that that is not a personal thing. It comes from a feeling of frustration. I know, as we all do, of the overwhelming task with which he is faced. However, there are certain things which must be done. In executing the duties that fall to him as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, he has responsibilities to Canada, the Government and fishermen which he must live up to.

That is the reason the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre and the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Nipigon moved the motion in the House. The Minister could stop this debate immediately by appearing before the committee, laying guidelines before the House on allocation, and giving us some indication on the record of what the game plan is to be. Unless this is done, he leaves us very little option. A responsible Opposition cannot allow a Bill such as this to be passed.

We recognize that when the Government wins a majority of 211 seats such as it has, it overwhelms the Opposition completely. We know that there are options. The Government can drag out any decision by having the Opposition talk it out until it has essentially bled it white and by not putting forward any opposition to a Bill such as this. We know that there is closure. However, in the past the Government has criticized that mechanism severely. It would be useful if the appropriate route to resolving this impasse were taken. The Minister must appear before the committee, give us some guidelines on how that allocation process is going to take place, and give us an indication of how the people who have used the resource are going to have a place in it. Will they maintain, as a base, traditional shares? Or has he in fact, through the salmon treaty, placed himself in an awkward position?

The Minister knows full well that there is a native dimension to this issue. There are a great number of native people on the coast of British Columbia who share in the industry. I will use rough figures as an illustration rather than absolute figures. Many user groups are saying that native people should have a participation rate at their traditional level. We all recognize that it is complex, but we want to know that the Minister is working on it and that he has a game plan to bring