

*Fisheries Development Act*

but unfortunately it represents the truth of the situation as it presently exists in Atlantic Canada. It was this unrest among fishermen, this frustration and despair and mounting criticism which caused Environment Canada to arrange meetings with fishermen and industry representatives when consultation took place over such matters as Canada's Law of the Sea proposal, licensing regulations and ship inspection laws. Just how effective such meetings really are in overcoming Ottawa's dictatorial image is open to question, since the meetings are planned by Ottawa, are run according to the ground rules of the department and are packed with high-ranking bureaucrats.

After these meetings a lot of fishermen have told me that they were over-awed by the well-educated, well-dressed officials and by the obvious power which these men wield. I have attended these meetings and can appreciate their concern. These fishermen are invited to come and express their views, but when they go home they realize their opinions may as well have been written on the winds, or on the sands! It is like baling water from a boat whose seams have opened below the waterline. It is an exercise in futility, in the opinion of the fishermen. Many of them know that the Minister of the Environment is trying to do something but they are not too sure whether his efforts are designed to help them or the foreign fishermen who roam our banks and pillage and plunder our resources. Obviously, the lines of communication between the minister and the fishermen who are the backbone of the fishing industry, are down and they must be repaired.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, throughout the discussions relating to the Fisheries Development Act, it has not been made clear exactly how the regulations governing grants and subsidies with respect to new vessel construction and equipment, vessel modification and conversion, ice-making and fish-chilling facilities and regulations governing the registration of vessels and licensing of operators, are interrelated. There appears to be a close connection between the regulations for registration of new vessels and those for subsidies for new vessel construction. There also appears to be a close relationship, in some cases, between regulations governing the subsidies for refrigerated sea-water units on board vessels and regulations governing subsidies for modification and conversion of vessels. Regulations governing the quality of fish handling, processing and distribution appear to be closely related and, in many cases, dependent upon the regulations in the areas I have mentioned.

We on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, are not opposed to the changes that have been proposed in this bill. We feel that the 35 per cent subsidy is inadequate, however, and in the light of present day costs the government should consider increasing this to at least 50 per cent. We believe that it would be helpful if the government made every effort to communicate with the fishermen so that those engaged in the industry would be alerted to its plans and, hopefully, improve upon them.

With all the staff that the minister has I think he should have one more person and that is a "gofor"—someone who can go for the information the fishermen and the wooden shipbuilders need. I am sure this gofor would be helpful to

[Mr. Crouse.]

the minister in finally planning and carrying out policies and programs which would have some input from the fishermen and have a more meaningful bearing on the future of their livelihood.

**Mr. Elias Nesdoly (Meadow Lake):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the comments of the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse), many of which were pertinent to the situation in eastern Canada, and I listened with a great deal of interest to the comments of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). Both of these gentlemen are Nova Scotians, and in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland the fishing industry is of major importance. The hon. member for South Shore talked about the importance of the fishery on the east coast, the Atlantic coast and in central Canada. When he said that, I felt just a wee bit insulted because there is a fairly significant freshwater fishery in the northern prairies and the Northwest Territories. The area which I represent in Saskatchewan produces quite a few million pounds of freshwater fish each year. Our fishermen have problems, too, although we may not hear about them too often in this House.

I sympathize with the problems of the hon. member for South Shore in regard to icemaking and fish-chilling facilities. I know that is a problem on the east coast but our problem is that our whole north country is an ice house for about eight months of the year. All we need is enough ice houses which we can fill in the wintertime and then we have no problem with fish-chilling facilities. Our problems are of a slightly different nature.

As I understand Bill C-2, it proposes a minor amendment which simply adds two words. The words are "modification, conversion and equipment of fishing vessels". Up to this time, I believe there have been government grants or assistance in respect of the construction of new vessels used in the fishing industry. This amendment will provide for modification and conversion of fishing vessels. I think this is an amendment worthy of the support of all members of this House. I know it will be supported by members of the party I represent. I only hope that when this amendment comes into effect its provisions will be available not only for the modification and conversion of vessels along our coasts, but also will be available to the freshwater fishermen in the prairies.

● (1240)

Earlier today I was speaking to some members who suggested that all we have are a bunch of potholes in Saskatchewan. I want to point out to some hon. members that the ninth largest lake in Canada, Lake Athabasca, is in my constituency. It is about 80 miles long by 40 miles wide and when a storm blows up, it is pretty fierce. I have been out on the lake. I think it is important to have some funds available to the fishermen in order that they may be able to improve or convert the vessels they have, because this would help them maintain the standard of the fishery.

Last year there were some minor amendments to the Fisheries Development Act which, as the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) pointed out, covered icemaking and ice-storing facilities. I think that was commendable. It is perhaps unfortunate this amendment was not included last year, but as the President of the Privy Council (Mr.