

Freshwater Fish Marketing Act

improve and strengthen the legislation, they will try to bring in legislation to kill it, and that can only be to the detriment and loss of freshwater fishermen in our part of Canada.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I do not deny the Hon. Member the right to bring this legislation forward during Private Members' Hour. It is his right. It is his prerogative as an elected Member of the House to introduce legislation and to seek the approval of all Hon. Members to ensure passage of the Bill.

As I understand it, the net effect of Bill C-211 will be to gut the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. I do not purport to be an expert on the responsibilities and functions of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, but I want to take this opportunity to take the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) to task for what might appear to some people to be a certain degree of hypocrisy. Let me explain why.

• (1730)

As the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) pointed out, the Minister, who was then a Member, one of many, a lowly back-bencher, made a speech on July 10, 1980. That is seven and a half years ago. What did he have to say? The Member for Richmond—South Delta, who is now the Minister of Fisheries, spoke about the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. If you bear with me for a moment, Mr. Speaker, I will quote a paragraph from his speech. It must have been a hot day, but he said:

I suggest what we have now is a system of monopolistic dominance in the fishmarketing industry, in the prairie provinces in particular, which is a far cry from what I understand to be the principle of democratic socialism where free enterprise and the private sector can co-operate in competition with one another. What we have is virtual communism in all of its forms in the example and illustration of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Complete monopoly powers are reflected in part III of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act to buy, sell, trade and engage in all handling of fish caught in freshwater areas of Canada. This monopolistic corporation comes complete with its mandarins and represents a significant drain on the public purse.

That is what the Minister said on July 10, 1980. You know that we in the Opposition are somewhat concerned about the Tory Members of Parliament who say one thing when it is convenient to say something on one side of an issue and then, at some later point in time, for whatever reason say another thing. We have documented Tory hypocrisy, if you will, over the last number of years. This is another example. The Minister said seven or eight years ago that this board consisted of mandarins and was virtually communistic. Now it appears that he has changed his mind. All of a sudden it is no longer communist. In fact, this corporation is so worthy of support that he is urging his colleagues to defeat a Private Members' Bill introduced by another Conservative Member of Parliament.

What caused the Member back in 1980 to refer to it as communism and today have a change of heart? We know that Mikhail Gorbachev was in Washington last week. We know that, together with Raisa Gorbachev, they were able to woo the

American people and woo the world. There was *glasnost*, treaties and East meeting West.

The Fisheries Minister did not indicate whether it was that that caused him to change his mind. Canadians have a right to expect their politicians to do as they say and not do things they say they are not going to do. Is it any wonder that people call into question the credibility and honesty of the Conservative Government when, on the one hand, it calls the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation communistic and then, when it is convenient, says what a great corporation it is.

We know how successful that corporation is. Maurice Blanchard from the Fisheries Advisory Committee said, "We strongly support the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and oppose Bill C-11 and any other moves that would weaken this organization. By any industry measure"—and I am quoting his letter of November 23, 1987—"the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is a success. It has shown steady growth and has just completed another year of record sales and record returns to the fishermen".

I will not go on about how the corporation was established by a Liberal Government, except to say that I appreciate the fact that the New Democratic Party has, in effect, through the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) applauded the previous Liberal administration for establishing the corporation.

One could go on about the New Democratic Party and how it applauds the previous Liberal administration when it is convenient, but when it is inconvenient the NDP is quick to criticize everything Liberal.

In the spirit of Christmas I will conclude my remarks and take this opportunity to wish you, Mr. Speaker, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and to say to Hon. Members opposite that, hopefully, their New Year's resolution will be not to be as hypocritical as they were in the past.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I try as much as I can to erase in a way the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata) from my memory, but he has done his usual bit.

With respect to the creation of this Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, I think the record will show that the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) referred to the fact that its creation was supported by all four Parties in the House of Commons at the time. It was supported because it was generally regarded as something long overdue, probably something which the Liberal Government of the day should have done some years before, having finally done it. The fact remains that there was then and there is now a consensus as to the value of having this Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in existence.

I rise to speak because I have an interest in the Corporation. Its major processing plant is in my riding. I have had occasion