

*Adjournment Debate*

Department of Fisheries office in Yarmouth last Tuesday in protest of the lack of quota for inshore draggers so far this year; ask the 500 or so people who turned out today to talk about the proposal that was given to them late on Friday in answer to their proposal. They are not happy with the assessment.

I should add that the fishermen are not alone in their suspicions about stock assessment in the Scotia—Fundy. Mr. Leslie Harris, Chairman of the government's independent review of the northern cod stock told me in committee that he also thought that the methods currently being used in the Scotia—Fundy were not good enough for such an important fishery.

I would like to tell the House and the people across Canada about the 500 people who were there this afternoon and what they were looking for. They were looking for their fair share of the natural resource outside their area.

Their history has been of year-round fishing. They have had lobster, herring, scallop and groundfish in the past. They had access to markets. In a county like Shelburne County, according to the report I had done for me, fish represents 100 per cent of the economy of Shelburne County. It represents 50 per cent of the economy of Yarmouth County and 60 per cent of the economy Digby County. Those counties have had access to those markets, have had access to the fishery for as far back as there have been settlements in those areas. At one time we had the healthiest fishery in Atlantic Canada. We don't today.

Over the last six years in this fishery, their quotas have decreased on rather bad stock evaluations. No one will say that there is not haddock. There was not haddock in the 1970s. They have seen a freezer factor ship given a licence to take pollock, which was the old stand-by fish in that area, a freezer factory ship that should be going for the underutilized species.

They have also seen what happened in the off-shore within that area. They have seen foreigners. Today, one fisherman, Joey Nickerson, said in that meeting that he had gone out for silver hake. He has a 45 foot boat. He was beside these foreigners fishing for silver hake. I

think he said the foreigners had 180 per cent pollock. It was not silver hake they were fishing on Brown's.

Brown's was closed to all the local boats in that area, but he could go to Brown's if he fished silver hake. That is a 45 foot boat along side these huge foreign freezer factory ships and big trawlers fishing about 60 miles from shore.

It does not make sense to the people. It does not make sense to me. It should not make sense to the opposition. It should not make sense to the minister. What are his departmental officials telling him? Who are his departmental officials allowing to get to him? The big foreigners, the off-shore? Certainly not the inshore fishermen who have been looking for a meeting with the minister or with any other ministers concerned with the groundfish.

Along with this they have been kept from going to what we call the Easter which is above Halifax. There are people who have fished there all their lives, eight years or longer, and they are not allowed to go at this time of the year into that area.

The other day I brought up in the House that there was a silver hake box with 42 foreigners fishing there when our fishermen cannot even go there. It is right next to the closed spawning area. The same dividing line that goes with the silver hake box for the foreigners is a dividing line for the spawning pollock. The foreigners are allowed to go there and fish at this time of year, but not our own boats.

The other thing that they have been faced with over the last six years is no clear stock evaluation. I have referred to the fact that Mr. Harris has said that before.

About 10 days ago they put in a proposal to the department. After at least five years, if not longer, of talking about a mesh size with the departmental officials at least five times a year, they have come to the agreement that they should have 130-square mesh. The department sends back 140-square mesh. There is never an agreement between the departmental officials and these fishermen. There is frustration. There is going to be some hard feelings. I am sure the minister would not like to see happen the threats that were being talked about today just because his officials are not playing fair with the people.