

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 3, 1967

The house met at 11 a.m.

FISHERIES

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESTRICTIONS RESPECTING LOBSTER FISHERY

Hon. H.-J. Robichaud (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, as the result of a general demand among lobster fishermen I am announcing today a program of limitation of the number of lobster traps per boat which will be introduced in all lobster fishing districts in the maritime provinces commencing with the 1968 lobster fishing seasons. The number of traps will be reduced further in most districts in 1969. I also wish to point out that the majority of lobster fishermen in all districts favour some limitation of the numbers permitted to engage in the fishery and, in addition to the trap limits consideration is being given to means of restricting entry into the lobster fishery in an equitable manner.

Earlier this year I made it quite clear that lobsters are a vital resource for thousands of Canada's inshore fishermen. It is imperative that this resource be managed as wisely as possible to ensure its continuance on a profitable basis to the fishermen.

I wish to make it very clear that this trap limit, as well as the restrictive measures which will be introduced, will not affect before 1968 the fishermen in district No. 3 where the fall season opened on October 15, in district No. 1 where the season will open on November 15 and district No. 4 where the season will open on December 1. These three areas will be affected, as will other areas in the maritimes, at the opening of their 1968 fishing seasons next fall. I thought it advisable to warn the fishermen now of the restrictions which will be imposed on them next year.

As the description and the variation of trap limits are different in different areas and would mean a rather lengthy report to give on motions, I would appreciate it if I could receive unanimous consent of the house to have a release which I am issuing today tabled and printed as an appendix to *Hansard* for this day.

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Mr. Speaker: Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Editor's note: For text of release referred to above, see appendix].

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Queens): Mr. Speaker, the announcement the Minister of Fisheries has just made is one of great importance to the lobster fishing industry in the Atlantic provinces. It stems, of course, from the fact that this is a limited resource and in recent years the product has become high priced, tending to attract into the industry a greater amount of equipment and personnel than is rationally needed to harvest the crop.

• (11:10 a.m.)

When government steps into a field and decrees regulations governing how private citizens may earn their living, the regulations must be drawn with great caution. I know and fishermen will recognize that if there is little regulation of the numbers of men and the amount of equipment to be used, the problem facing their industry in the overexploitation of their resources and the difficulty of controlling and harvesting that resource in an equitable and efficient manner will worsen. I trust, nevertheless, that the minister will exercise great caution. I hope the fishing industry and the department have co-operated in every possible way in deciding what the limitation should be and how limitation of entry into the industry is to be brought about so that undue hardship will not result for any individual. I presume the experiment to limit gear in some areas has been satisfactory.

We note with consternation that the lobster fishing industry in some areas has had a difficult and unproductive year. We hope that this measure, if it is wisely and carefully implemented, will result in benefits to the industry generally.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, probably more than any other group in our society, fishermen over the years have come to accept governmental impingement on what one normally considers the right to pursue one's vocation. The impingement I refer to here is the impingement by the government