

Supply

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): You were misquoting the Minister of Fisheries for the province who said Ottawa should force quotas against the foreigners.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for St. John's East has the floor.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Madam Speaker. One of the problems that we face and it was brought to my attention quite graphically in Bonavista when I participated with fishermen this weekend in dealing with the question is that more and more of what we have called inshore fishermen in Newfoundland have been forced to move farther and farther out in bigger boats with bigger equipment. The question then becomes, are they taking fish that would normally be counted in the offshore quota within Canada? We have seen less and smaller fish on the traditional inshore. That question and that answer have many implications in a number of areas.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Of course.

Mr. Reid: Quite clearly it is a problem that we have been forced to confront in Nova Scotia.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): And in Newfoundland.

Mr. Reid: As we deal with what we have to deal with in the next little while in Newfoundland we will have to deal with it as well. But to suggest that those boats, the trawlers and others can immediately go over the line, or I think you are saying, catch the fish that is being made available to foreigners inside the zone, considering the process that we go through in terms of offering that fish to Canadian companies, we must ask whether they can take it, whether can they process it and whether they can market it?

Silver hake is one example. The whitefish from other places have taken silver hake out. There are all sorts of silver hake sitting in Hubbards. We cannot sell it. People cannot get it if they cannot produce it. I could go on—

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Help them sell it. That is your role as a government, to help them sell it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Resuming debate. My best wishes to the hon. member for Cardigan.

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to speak on a motion that is before the House. As a member of Parliament for Cardigan, Prince Edward Island, the issue is especially important since the fishing industry is of vital importance to my constituents and my fellow islanders. Never before has the fishery been in such dire straits. The crisis the Atlantic fishery is currently facing has been brought on in large measure by the insensitivity of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to the industry's needs.

It might do the minister good to come to Cardigan or anywhere else in Atlantic Canada and see for himself the hardship this crisis is causing. Perhaps if he would look into the eyes of a lobster fisherman who has no market for his product or into the eyes of a child whose mother or father has just lost his or her job at the fish plant, maybe then he could do something for these Cardigan families.

I see these people all the time during my travel in the ridings. Fishermen are angry, angry at how they have been treated, angry at the lack of action from Ottawa. Fear and nervousness are running rampant among Island fishermen and fish plant workers. All about them they see declining stocks, loss of markets, fish plants closing, cuts to the UI program and increasing taxes. If we do not have enough problems with our own government's policies, now the giant to the south of us is rising to strike what might be the final blow to the industry.

The Americans are threatening us with legislation that could ban minimum sized Canadian lobsters from the U.S. market. The U.S. scored a huge victory this week in the first decision of the binational panel under the free trade agreement on Canadian fish landing rules.

Atlantic Canada has suffered greatly at the hands of this government. The fishing industry is the lifeline of our region. This industry is fundamental to the Prince Edward Island economy. It is the second largest industry in our province, second only to agriculture. It is also, a primary and seasonal resource industry which has taken more than its fair share of punishment from this government.

• (1620)

On P.E.I. there are 2,500 fishermen, 1,400 helpers and about 2,500 fish plant workers. These people account for