

Oral Questions

I have obtained from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans this morning an assessment of the regulations that were tabled today. Its own assessment points out that they will affect the raw material supply for processors which will lead directly to the export of jobs in this industry from Canada. A commitment was made in the House in the fall of 1987 to protect this industry. It was repeated in the spring of 1988. Why has the Government completely abandoned its commitment to 7,500 working Canadians in British Columbia?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to review some of the history of the GATT panel which was brought against Canada. Canadian processors were buying Alaska salmon and Alaskan processors were asking for the same privilege. At that time a GATT panel was brought against Canada and they found in November, 1977, that Canadian regulations were not in accordance with the GATT. Accordingly, in March, 1988, Canada adopted the request of GATT, but at the same time made a commitment to the fishermen and the fish industry of the West Coast that regulations would be brought in, which have been brought in, to land salmon and herring in British Columbia for conservation purposes. That has been undertaken and our commitment to the fishermen on the West Coast has been upheld.

Mr. Broadbent: Just a minute ago, in reference to another question, the Minister of Finance said that the Leader of the Opposition had a short memory. Let me say that this Minister has a short memory in terms of the promises made by the Government of Canada on this issue.

LOSS OF JOBS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA TO UNITED STATES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the promise not by one Minister but by two Ministers, was that the new regulations that would be brought in to protect the jobs in British Columbia would ensure that grading and quality control would continue to be done in Canada. According to the regulations that have just come out, the Government has yielded to American pressure to abandon that and to get rid of those two specific commitments that would have kept those jobs in Canada. It will lead very directly, as he knows, because it is part of the Free Trade Agreement, to the transfer of

these jobs directly from British Columbia to the United States. Why?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I seem to remember that this was the same Leader who predicted the loss of 200,000 jobs when the Minister of Finance brought in his economic statement in 1985. That is how accurate he is in predicting job loss.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDermid: I can tell the Hon. Member that there will not be job losses—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McDermid: —that the salmon and herring industry will remain viable on the West Coast. The landing requirements are perfectly GATT-consistent.

I might also say that this is the same Leader who went around the country saying that our salvation in trade is in the GATT. The first time a GATT panel comes against Canada he wants to forget it.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN COMMITMENTS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Minister may not like my predictions, but I have a document from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans which I received this morning. Its words, not mine, are as follows: "This will affect the raw material supply for processors". The same paragraph states: "The revocation of the export restrictions could result in an increased number of landing stations and—"please note:—"the export of large quantities of unprocessed fish". When large quantities of unprocessed fish are exported, British Columbia jobs are exported with them. That is the reality.

My supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. Since it was not that Minister but the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Fisheries who made the commitment in the House that these jobs would be protected and the new regulations would keep these jobs in British Columbia, why has the Government of Canada sold them down the drain?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Government has not sold out the West Coast fishermen. That is a silly statement by the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party, and he knows it.

An Hon. Member: You gave it away.