

*Government Orders*

are regarded by many in the industry simply as a cost of doing business. Therefore, this bill will introduce substantially increased penalties for general fisheries offences.

The bill also attempts to establish proper means of collecting and verifying catches and data. The Haché task force observed that motivation to misreport the areas of species fish is high, and that industry participants had repeatedly claimed that such data was flawed. As a result, the accuracy of information received by the department is questionable due to large scale misreporting and enforcement problems.

In February of 1990, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans released the Harris report on the state of the northern cod stock. The report, written by Dr. Leslie Harris of Memorial University, concluded that a vital goal of management strategy must be the improvement of data used in assessment. It noted the misreporting of catches, disregard rates, and other significant inaccuracies in commercial catch data.

It is now obvious that the industry must be better managed by imposing stiffer penalties for violations and by more effective enforcement. If the government is indeed committed to such initiatives, then it must also ensure that representatives of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans are well trained and well-equipped to carry out their heightened duties. It is in all our interests to see the industry better policed, but mere words will not accomplish this. I hope the government will follow up with action.

It is also in all our interests to see the fishery better managed over all. I am afraid that we seriously doubt the government's commitment to doing so. We question the government's commitment to the fishery and to the people who depend upon it, directly or indirectly, to survive. We question the government's commitment to the people and to the economy of Atlantic Canada in general. The mismanagement of our primary resource, the fishery, provides a tragic metaphor for this lack of commitment.

• (1550)

Stiffer penalties and better enforcement, while admirable, are mere band-aid measures for an industry that is being neglected to death by the government. The government's only action, thus far, has been to cut quotas in the name of stock preservation and to attempt to silence the industry with its inadequate fishery aid package of last winter. I will not discuss in detail the many criticisms

of such actions, but I will say that the government's response must go beyond such band-aid measures and must use federal resources of funds, expertise, and information to bring about a fundamental restructuring of the economy, both regional and national. Economic development and diversification must be part of the response to the crisis in the fishery, to the crisis that is facing Atlantic Canada.

The east coast is extremely dependent on the fishery. In Prince Edward Island, the fishery is one of three major areas of the economy. Prince Edward Island has approximately 2,500 fishermen, 2,500 plant workers, and 1,400 ancillary workers. These people make up about 10 per cent of the provincial work force and the fishery makes up about 30 per cent of the province's total export market.

It is a sad fact of human nature that when times are good we tend to ignore such imbalances. We fail to acknowledge, or we do not let ourselves acknowledge, the potential for problems. Well, the good times are over. Why can the government not admit that some fundamental mistakes have been made, and why does it not have the guts to correct them?

As I said before, violations of fishery laws by Canadian fishermen and the lack of effective enforcement by DFO are only part of the problem. The plundering of Canadian fish stocks by foreign vessels has to stop if there is to be any hope of replenishing our fish stocks. Fish in Canadian waters must go to Canadian fishermen first. We must not delude ourselves that the Europeans, for example, care about the state of the northern cod stock or the crisis facing Atlantic Canada. When there are no more fish, either for the Spanish or Portuguese ships, they are not going to be too upset about Atlantic Canada. They will go back home, leaving chaos in their wake. Why will the Canadian government not stand up for its own resource and for its own people?

Every time we ask the government what has been done to convince the European community of the damage it is wreaking upon the east coast and of our sovereignty over our own resource, we hear that the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister for International Trade are talking. And, yes, I will agree that they do a lot of that, as does the government, but nothing happens. If the results of the agricultural talks at the recent GATT negotiations are any indication, the government can talk the ear off anybody. But, again, nothing happens. The Europeans, like any other nationalistic or economic bloc, are looking out for their own interests and they are