

months ago, why not say so? It is disquieting to have the device of private opinion used in such cases.

It is likely that the minister would prefer a stronger stand than that taken by the government as a whole. Truly, in our dealings with Denmark we have been mealy-mouthed and passive. Not only in reference to Denmark but to many other countries trespassing on our rights, the same pusillanimous attitude is being revealed. The fishing industry in our country is in grave danger; our fishermen face grave hazards. As my colleague for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) put it some weeks ago, Canadian fishermen are the sacrificial lambs in governmental negotiations. He and my colleagues from Newfoundland and the maritime provinces have pressed vigorously for a more alert, aggressive and articulate attitude on the part of Canada on behalf of its long suffering fishermen.

Polite notes have not been productive. Perhaps the time has come for some straightforward action and assertion of our rights. It is passing strange that we are unable or unwilling to slow the verve and stamina of such countries as Iceland and Peru. Surely we can produce something more than failed and frustrated efforts at international gatherings, and publicly-proclaimed private boycotts which are phased out as mere personal opinions.

Mr. Paul St. Pierre (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) is in full flight tonight with phrases such as "mealy-mouthed" and "passive". I cannot agree with him that that has been the government's record. We are all aware that the recent meeting of the International Commission for the North-west Atlantic Fisheries in Washington did not accept the Canadian view that there must be an immediate ban on high seas fishing for Atlantic salmon. The strenuous efforts we have made over the past months and years to achieve this goal will therefore continue.

The hon. member for Hillsborough inquired in recent weeks whether the views of the Canadian government had been presented to the government of Denmark. I can repeat the assurance which the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) gave him, that we have repeatedly urged the Danish government to co-operate with us. Over the past year the government of Denmark has been made fully aware of our position on this urgent matter, not only through bilateral contacts such as the visit of the Minister for the Environment (Mr. Davis) to Copenhagen, but through scientific meetings at which the matter has been fully discussed.

• (2210)

Canadian scientists attending these sessions have taken the opportunity to present as forcefully as possible to the scientific experts of other ICNAF countries, including Denmark, our information on the decline of Atlantic salmon stocks. Indeed, the recent ICNAF meeting, while it did not accept our call for an immediate ban on high seas fishing, did accept that Canadian rivers especially those flowing into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, contribute substantially to the Greenland salmon fishery and that losses suffered by that fishery may be greatest for rivers flowing into the Gulf. It was also recognized that data for the

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Miramichi River shows a steady decline in the stock of large salmon in this river.

In addition to the scientific information which Canada has presented in recent months, the government of Denmark has also been informed of the drastic action taken by the Canadian government in closing commercial salmon operations on the east coast, as well as about the motion on Atlantic salmon adopted by this House on April 25. In light of these actions the Danes were urged to re-examine their position prior to the May ICNAF meeting.

The suggestion of a consumer boycott of Danish products has been dealt with previously in this House. As the Prime Minister pointed out on May 10, such a boycott is not the position of the Canadian government.

NATIONAL DEFENCE—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE THAT FOURTH TRAINING SQUADRON BASED AT ESQUIMALT WILL BE OPERATIONAL THIS SUMMER

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, *Hansard* reports that on June 16 I asked the following question of the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Benson):

During the course of the hearings of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence with respect to the defence white paper, it was suggested to the committee that the fourth training squadron based at Esquimalt might not be operational this summer because of the difficulties of finding the four to eight necessary engine room personnel. Since the squadron is capable of training some 500 reservists from all parts of the country during the summer, can the minister assure the House that it will be operational this summer?

The minister's reply was as follows:

I will have to check on its current status and report back to the House.

That answer annoyed me, Mr. Speaker, because we only have about 40 vessels in commission in the fleet and the fourth training squadron represents about one-tenth of the total number of commissioned vessels. I should have thought that in that kind of situation—a fleet of that small size—the minister might have been expected to be aware of what was happening to an entire squadron of ships, especially when one considers that what this squadron does affects directly or indirectly the capabilities of some 2,800 naval reservists in this country.

Beyond that, in the long run it affects the capability of the fleet to respond to a challenge, because the fleet relies upon the reserves to supplement its numbers in an emergency. Since the number of naval personnel now available for manning ships is so low, none of the ships at sea have a full-time war complement. I think it is extremely important to know what is happening to the fourth training squadron, and I should expect that with only two weeks remaining before the peak of the training season the minister might know whether it is to be operational.

I sincerely hope to get an answer this evening. That is the reason I posted the question for discussion. I think the inability of the training squadron, possibly, to go to sea because of difficulties in finding two engine-room personnel for each of four ships and, in addition, one administrative person for each ship—a total of 12 people—is indicative of what is happening to the armed forces as a whole under the direction of the government, and of the govern-