

Supply

statement on their specific fisheries policy. I suspect, however, that they are once again a dollar short and a day late.

Our range of alternatives has already been distributed to the members of MAC under covering letter dated Tuesday, January 31, 1984, but we will be pleased to consider any productive inputs the Opposition may wish to make in the debate.

Among the other issues on which we are anxious to hear the Opposition is their specific fishery policy as it relates to native Indians. We would like them to tell us clearly whether they favour measures to increase native economic benefits through commercialization of all or any part of the so-called food fishery. We would like very much to have them tell us clearly and out loud, and to tell the native and non-native people of Canada, particularly those from British Columbia, what their policy is and what their recommendations to us are regarding native Indian participation in the commercial fishery.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Minister, but I must advise him that his time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement to allow the Minister to continue briefly?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, may I thank Members on all sides for their courtesy.

On behalf of the Government I have made my policy views very clear in a well publicized speech to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia. I have engaged in consultations with Indian leaders. I have made funds available and have encouraged B.C. Indian leaders and organizations to confer and consult among themselves and their respective constituencies. I have ended discriminatory fish mutilation requirements, put in place a special directorate in the Pacific region headed by Mr. Hikle, himself an Indian, to interface on a daily direct basis with Indian groups. We have implemented pilot test programs. We have studied and developed a range of alternatives on these issues which have already been distributed to the MAC for consultations and discussions.

● (1450)

This opposition Party, whose political integrity seems to be slipping daily, has the unprecedented temerity to condemn this Government for not acting. Once again, Mr. Speaker, this Government has had the courage to tackle the truly difficult issues. It has done so quietly and properly, with full respect for the magnitude of the issues and with a recognition of and concern for, the long-term impacts of those most affected. I have clearly and publicly committed myself to give due consideration and importance to the recreational fishery of British Columbia, the sport fishery.

In response to the representations made by the Sport Fishery Advisory Board, on behalf of nearly 400,000 B.C. sports fishermen—which does not include the 75,000 British Columbians younger than 16 years of age—and on behalf of the marina resort and charter operators, equipment and tackle manufacturers and distributors, and suppliers of tourist services, we have undertaken exclusive studies and analyses of the social and economic impact of this growing and increasingly significant segment of the Pacific fishery. We have developed a range of possible initiatives aimed at enhancing both the quality of the experience and the positive economic impact of it.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, according to all the experts I have consulted, that British Columbia is among the best recreational sport fishery facilities and fishing grounds in the world. It is absolutely unequalled. We have begun a fuller examination of the economic development and employment-creation potential offered by this activity to both native and non-native coastal communities. Again, a range of possible initiatives has been developed for discussion and consultation.

We recognize that until a matter of only a few days ago, B.C. members of the Tory Opposition were not even aware of the extent of participation, nor the economic significance of the B.C. sports fishery; but we would ask that Party nevertheless to state its views on the role of the B.C. sports fishery in overall Pacific fisheries policies. Is that Party aware that about 37 per cent of all person-years of employment generated by Canada's Pacific salmon fishery are estimated to be generated by the sport fishery on the basis of about 4 per cent of the catch?

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): When did you learn that?

Mr. Huntington: We have it over here, too.

Mr. De Bané: We are anxious to hear, Mr. Speaker, as I am sure are many of the constituents of the Members opposite, what their proposals are for the sport fishery.

Finally, I would like to inform the Hon. Members opposite that I have taken steps throughout the period since Dr. Pearse completed his report to encourage the various sectors of the Pacific fishery to work together productively. I have met personally with the MAC. This Government has made certain that sectoral representatives have been given time, the necessary resources and the opportunity to consider the issues, not the least of which is the consultative process. I recently authorized funds for necessary travel, accommodation and the cost of a professional facilitator of their own choosing to assist in the development of proposals for an improved consultative process.

I would like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that even under the existing structure, given just this encouragement, opportunity and support—and perhaps with mild prodding offered indirectly through my staff and officials—this sector has on its