

Supply

people, who realize that there is more in Canada causing disunity than just a language problem. There are a lot of serious economic problems and a lot of cultural problems. I and my six fellow colleagues from Newfoundland are the youngest Canadians here. As Canadians we are just 24 years old. We have a lot of social welfare problems, a lot of economic problems, but we would feel a lot more at home in confederation if we saw a manifestation on the part of any government, whether it be a government made up of hon. members opposite or a government made up of hon. members on this side, that it knew our problems were real. All Canadians have their own problems, but they are not getting the response from the government that they should be getting. I plead with hon. members to pay attention to our problems because they strike at the roots of the system in this federal country.

Mr. McCain: Mr. Chairman, I wish I had the sense of humour and the ability to deliver a speech displayed by the hon. gentleman who has just spoken, but I do not. One thing I resent is that no man delivered a speech with more sincerity than he and was faced with more mockery by hon. gentlemen to your right, Sir. They took it in a very lighthearted fashion. I exclude the minister from that, but those who sit behind him treated the speech with laughter. That is a disgrace to this House and an insult to the fishing industry.

I would like to pose just a few questions that hon. members might consider. Place yourself in the position of a clam-digger in the Atlantic area who is eligible for unemployment insurance. It is in the law of the land that you are eligible. So you try to find out why it is impossible to draw benefits. You go the Minister of Fisheries, if there is one, and he tells you, "You have a complete season. There is no reason why you should not get unemployment insurance." But you know that you have a very limited fishing season because the minister has closed down the fishery.

When you try to find out from the Minister of National Health and Welfare why you cannot get unemployment insurance stamps, you are told it is because the terms and conditions regarding unemployment insurance for clam-diggers have been set by the Department of National Revenue, and not even the Department of Fisheries can help you. Laugh that off, I say to hon. gentlemen opposite.

The fisherman is confused beyond reason by the host of regulations emanating from Ottawa, regulations drawn up without consultation with the fishermen. We are told in the Bay of Fundy that we should catch only a very limited number of fish of various species. But when one talks to fishermen who have been placed on quota, they say, "The best description of our quota that we can give you is that a Gloucester fisherman once said, 'The Russians don't need sonar. For generations we have been able to find schools of fish, but now when we find them the Russians overrun us and we cannot catch them.'"

The catch in that area is down to 20 per cent of what it was 25 years ago. It is less than 50 per cent of what it was before international fishing fleets invaded those waters. While our fishing boats are halted at the 12-mile limit off the United States coasts, U.S. boats are allowed to fish up to the three-mile limit off our coasts. I do not know how

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

the hon. gentleman from Newfoundland would describe that, but it is a most unfortunate situation.

When confederation was formed there were free tie-up privileges at the docks of this nation, from coast to coast, for fishermen. Why is it that fourth generation fishermen, for the first time are now being charged for tie-up privileges at their home docks and are being hauled into court for non-payment? Why are these regulations invoked? They give rise to frustration, defeat and discouragement. We have a situation in one province where the average age of farmers is 55 years. It is virtually impossible, by virtue of regulations, for a young man to get into the fishing business today, following the practice of his father or grandfather, because he cannot get a licence.

• (2120)

I am quite prepared to recognize that the minister and his department are taking a very serious look at conservation, which of course is important. I submit, however, that it is vital that the minister and his staff get out into the fishing area, get to know the problems of the people and achieve liaison between the department and the fishermen in order to understand their problems and meet them on their own ground.

It has been so long since a general survey of docks has taken place in many areas that the badly needed repairs will be very expensive indeed. While a minimum of work is going on, it is not enough. In many instances, harbours along the coast are no longer capable of accommodating the boats. If you were a fisherman and were told by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce that you could buy a boat and it was such a good boat that the department would pay 50 per cent subsidy, and if you managed to get a little conversation going with the then department of fisheries—a department that has now disappeared—and your department of fisheries financed you and bought the boat for about \$350,000, you would think the government was going to pay the 50 per cent and everybody had financed it for you. You would fish with it for two and a half years and then would come the Canadian steamship inspection service and say, "I am sorry that your boat is not seaworthy. We are going to tie it up at the dock."

You might ask what you were going to fish with, but that does not make any difference; your boat is not seaworthy so you find yourself out of pocket \$350,000 for a boat that you bought with the assistance of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce but with no assistance from the Department of Fisheries. In good faith you bought the boat. Do you blame the people in the Bay of Fundy area who wonder what is going on in the Department of Fisheries in Ottawa? Do you blame the salmon fishermen who wonder which way they are going when the minister says, and I am sure he means it, "We will treat you fairly"? Then along comes a representative of the department who says that there is only \$125,000 allocated for this work and it is impossible to give you any more money. That is what a representative told a fisherman in our area—"The money is all spent." Now that statement has been taken back.

I beg you, Mr. Chairman, to call the committee to order and not to take the subject of fishing so lightly as it was