

*Fisheries Act*

remain in the House until the Minister rose in his place and explained what was happening, no matter how long it took, these people replied, yes, they would like to see it stay in the House until they know whether they are going to have a guaranteed place in the industry. It is regrettable that a Minister of the Crown can stand in this House and make such a blatant, I think, misrepresentation of what is actually happening and what the wishes of the user groups are, every one of whom has been contacted and everyone of whom has said unilaterally across the board, "Don't let that Bill go through until the Government gives us an idea of who is going to be pushed out of this industry and who is going to remain in it".

The Minister knows full well that he has made private deals—or suggested information which would have led people to believe they had private deals—on the allocation of fish. We are not going to tolerate that. No responsible legislator would tolerate that kind of thing.

**Mr. Fraser:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is really a point of privilege. The Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River has every right to debate. He has no right to accuse me of making private deals which have not been made.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Skelly:** On the same point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that there have been groups who have come before the Minister and have left thinking there was a deal. It may not have been a deal in the Minister's mind, but certainly the kind of information which has been imparted to certain groups has left them with the impression that they do have a deal, something to fall back on.

**Mr. Fraser:** I rise on a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River is compounding his sin. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I do not have to stand here and take accusations which literally call me a liar. That is what the Hon. Member is doing. I suggest that he withdraw his accusation, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Chair rules that this is not a point of order. I would ask the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly) to continue on debate.

**Mr. Skelly:** Mr. Speaker, the point is that the Government must provide guidelines. The user groups are telling the Minister and the Government very clearly that they recognize the seriousness of this problem and that chaos could develop in the industry, but the chaos is not of their making. The chaos is of this Government's making because it has failed to adopt a base line of operations, some simple guidelines which would assure everyone a position in the industry, a guarantee that they could maintain the type of proportional shares which have been available in the past until a mechanism can be developed which would allocate that resource fairly and equitably.

That is the issue in the House. There is no attempt in reality to insult the Minister and no attempt to cast a slur on the Government. There is no point in standing up in this House and kicking opposition Members. What we want to see is

co-operation. We want to see the Minister laying down guidelines from which user groups can benefit. We want the Minister to come before the committee to tell us what is going on, even if he is not prepared to tell other people in the public domain. That would lead to better communication in this House.

● (1130)

It is the user groups, Mr. Speaker, the people we represent, who are saying, "Hold this Bill". It is not an irresponsible move, it is something that any responsible legislator, especially in opposition, would do. When we asked some questions about the salmon treaty, when would we see it and get it before committee, the Government said it had already agreed to it. It was outrageous that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) should have stood up in this House and criticized the NDP for asking questions about this treaty and then, down the road, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans admitted that there are serious problems with the treaty but that the Prime Minister wants it very badly. We then found out that the Prime Minister never even read the document. It went through Cabinet in 30 minutes so the Prime Minister would have something to give away to his new found friend in the United States. That is totally outrageous and unacceptable. I see the Minister is dancing around in his chair. I would love to have him jump to his feet and comment on that particular act of faith.

This motion to hoist the Bill provides the House with an opportunity to look more calmly at the question. There are other points of view which both government Members and the Opposition can put on the record. This motion is an excellent idea, it gives us some time. There is no point in taking the Bill before a committee until we have some idea of what the Minister's game plan for the fishery will be. We all know the Minister to be an honourable gentleman of good intentions, but he has been somewhat constrained and confined by his colleagues who have a philosophical fixation which is alien to this country. They want to cut money from a basic resource of the coastal provinces of this nation. They want to cut personnel from the departments involved. In reality, the Prime Minister simply wants to trade off with the President of the United States something which he sees as being of little value in return for something he sees as being of major value. But we as Canadians still do not know what that is.

Let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, that second reading of this Bill means approval in principle, and we will then not have a chance to change its elements substantially. Given the Government's overwhelming majority, it is very hard for the Opposition in committee to resist arbitrary changes. We know the Bill is out of the public eye when it is in committee. Time allocation is much easier to impose in committee. If we pull our finger out of the dyke, we might as well approve the Bill all the way through.

The Minister has said he will take all the responsibility for what happens on the salmon treaty. Well, we know there are some problems with the treaty. Could he come before the