

To assist in this research Statistics Canada is now in the field with a large scale detailed expenditure survey which will get more detail and more effective information from the lower end of income distribution. At the present time current data on expenditures cannot be used to calculate special indices for persons in different economic and social circumstances.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. minister, but the time allotted to him has expired.

The Chair recognizes the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall).

[English]

FISHERIES—PRESENCE OF PORTUGUESE AND FRENCH DRAGGERS IN ST. GEORGE'S BAY—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Madam Speaker, I must say that my question tonight is an annual one because it recurs every year at this time. It has to do with the regularity of the interference of foreign druggers who ignore agreements with Canada on the extension of fishing limits and persist in taking advantage of our marine resources regardless of what Canada introduces by way of regulations to protect our zones. Madam Speaker, you can probably do a lot more since this is the first time you are in the chair when I am bringing this matter to the attention of the Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc). Over the years nothing has been done.

I am convinced that the new Minister of State (Fisheries) is sympathetic toward the problems of the fisheries in Atlantic Canada, and I am sure that he will do his utmost to achieve the objective of protection of our marine resources for the benefit of Canadian fishermen. But unfortunately he has to be guided by the apathetic determination of his government which keeps—and I hesitate to use the expression—pussyfooting around the issue of protection.

Again, as in the past, foreign druggers persist in ignoring Canadian laws, and each year they help to destroy the livelihood of our Newfoundland fishermen. It becomes more and more obvious that Canada does not have the proverbial guts to do anything about it, for political reasons. This year 38 druggers or so appeared in the Bay St. George area on the south west and west coasts of Newfoundland and continued to deplete a fast declining resource upon which fishermen in that area depend for their livelihood.

In spite of efforts by the government to build up our control and surveillance capability, these foreign druggers continue to ignore Canadian law, and in spite of the fact that concerned members of parliament bring the matter to the attention of the government time and time again, the government continues its apathetic consideration, and continues to hope that there will be agreement at the Law of the Sea Conference that we will receive acceptance of a majority of nations to implement 200 mile limits, or in the case of Newfoundland the limit of the Continental shelf.

Adjournment Debate

I have made every effort to be reasonable, but I am convinced that we are being taken for the proverbial ride. The foreign nations are laughing at us, as they are laughing at the lack of capability we project in our surveillance and patrol.

● (2220)

The procrastination and the apathy of our government are not serving any other purpose than to destroy any initiative or effort of individuals who are trying to maintain a viable resource industry, but are continually being discouraged by the lack of backbone portrayed by our government.

The government keeps evading the issue by relating, in answer to queries by those concerned, that Canada will achieve the desired results by ongoing discussions. I have come to the conclusion, however, that I am just as naive as the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) in thinking that we will achieve some sort of agreement.

Further to my question on the persistent evidence of Portuguese and French druggers in the area mentioned, it has now come to my attention that not only are the French druggers using every advantage to fish within our 12 mile limit by way of treaty negotiations but that Portuguese druggers are imposing on our lack of backbone and applying and receiving French licences because of the preferred treaty negotiations.

I am completely alarmed at the attitude of our government with respect to the future of the control and protection of our marine resources in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. I realize that the minister is sympathetic to our cause—I am sure he will do his utmost—and I am convinced that given the time he will achieve the objective of ensuring a viable industry for Atlantic Canada. But we have run out of time—long run out of time, I must repeat. Unless Canada shows some backbone in taking unilateral action in preserving or conserving our marine resources, we should admit our lack of guts. But that would betray the thousands of Canadians who continue to rely and pray that they can eke out a reasonable livelihood from our food resources.

I hope the parliamentary secretary, who is very conscientious, will be able to give me the direction the Canadian government is taking to protect the marine resources in Canada, particularly Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Len Marchand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in the three minutes at my disposal it is difficult to answer all the questions raised by the hon. member. In order to set the complete stage I think it would have been important to talk about the territorial seas phase-out agreement that we have had with other countries, but there will not be time for that.

Reports on the presence of foreign vessels in St. George's Bay have been referred to the regional officials of the Fisheries and Marine Service in St. John's, Newfoundland, who are aware that units of the French fishing fleet have been operating in the St. George's Bay area. Under the terms of the phasing out agreement between Canada and France, metropolitan French vessels are per-