

Fisheries Act

lateral amendments, like the one he made on May 11, without consultation with and participation by the Canadian fishermen concerned, and they must obey his dictatorial edict. That is part of the announcement made by the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry on May 11, 1970. The news communiqué states:

• (3:40 p.m.)

An immediate freeze on the catching capacity of Canada's Atlantic herring fishing fleet was announced today by Fisheries and Forestry Minister Jack Davis.

The purpose of this freeze is to prevent any further increase in fishing capacity to occur before more is known about the size of our herring stocks and the fishing pressures which they can withstand.

Mr. McGrath: That is like locking the stable door after the horse has been stolen.

Mr. St. Pierre: That is an original phrase!

Mr. Crouse: The new release continues:

Canadian landings of herring off the east coast were valued at \$12 million in 1969. Landings have increased five-fold over the past seven years. It is expected that more than 500,000 tons of herring will be caught in this area in 1970.

I could go on. I find no fault with the minister's announcement as it relates to the Bay of Fundy, but he makes no mention of controls in another large herring fishing area, namely, the Gulf of St. Lawrence. One would think that before making an announcement which affects the investment of so many companies and the livelihood of so many fishermen in Atlantic Canada, he would have discussed the situation with the fishermen and the processors, but such has not been the case. True to form, the Minister of Fisheries barged ahead making decisions and statements unilaterally without consulting anyone in the fishing industry.

Like his leader he is great at telling people what he intends to do, and it is always for their own good. But now that he and his friends are in power there is no need to consult with anyone. You can imagine the surprise felt by representatives of the fishing industry when they met on May 11 in St. John's, Newfoundland, and heard for the first time the minister's plan to freeze east coast herring licences, to place an upper limit on the tonnage of boats engaged in this industry through licence limitation. The minister certainly rocked the boat of the fishing industry on May 11. I would again refer hon. members to the statement in the second paragraph of the news release:

The purpose of this freeze is to prevent any further increase in fishing capacity to occur before

[Mr. Crouse.]

more is known about the size of our herring stocks and the fishing pressures which they can withstand.

How bombastic can the minister become in displaying his arrogant attitude toward Canadian fishermen? Under the Fisheries Act he can control our fishermen and dictate to them until there is no industry left but only a small group of people subservient to the minister. I ask him to tell this House now whether he has received any agreement from Russia, Poland, France, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom or the United States that these nations with their large fishing fleets on our Atlantic coast will refrain from catching herring. While these nations continue to plunder and pillage our fisheries resources, the minister complains in his announcement of May 11 that Canadian landings of herring have increased five-fold in the last seven years, so in his opinion the government must put a stop to this enterprise. His attitude is: We won't bother to consult with the industry before taking dictatorial action; we will go ahead and confine the catch arbitrarily to its present eve.

What bureaucratic nonsense is this? How does the minister propose to learn more about the size of the herring stocks? Will the nations which are raping our offshore stocks let him know the number of pounds they have landed; or will the figures come from Information Canada? Mr. Speaker, I fear for this country. I fear for the future of our fishing industry since it is obvious that the minister and the government have lost their powers of reason.

Obviously, the only way in which some control can be exercised over the size of our herring stocks or, in fact, in connection with the conservation of our entire fishery, is by way of international consultation and agreement. If the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) had spent as much time consulting his counterparts in the great fishing nations of the world on fisheries conservation as he has spent chasing after officials to get Red China to recognize Canada, we would, hopefully, have been able to announce an international fisheries consultation policy by now.

It is obvious to fishermen that the fishing industry is not one of paramount concern to the government and that it means nothing to the minister of external affairs, who cannot seem to reach agreement with France on our 12-mile limit legislation and who failed mis-