

Government Organization Act, 1970

Mr. Lundrigan: If I were the foreign minister I would have a little more backbone than the minister sitting over there.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lundrigan: We get about as much direction from him as we would get from a ripe watermelon. He gives no direction. I do not believe the minister is sincere, because whenever he does give an answer it is calculated for its political impact. Every time he does give an answer he has a grin or he is laughing at us as he is laughing tonight. This is the kind of thing that gets under the skin of Newfoundlanders. I would suggest that the minister is not welcome in our province with that kind of attitude.

An hon. Member: Oh, come off it.

Mr. Lundrigan: Why does the minister not stand in his place and tell us the Canadian government's position in respect of our marine resources? What is our position? The minister is going to present something to the Law of the Sea conference. What is our position? Are we going to take action? If the Russians say they are not going to move off and they are not going to restrict their technology, are we going to take aggressive action?

The Minister of Fisheries was told something in the committee today. To be honest, I did not know this and apparently it was not known by the minister's people. This department has no surveillance. The only surveillance it gets is tidbits of information supplied by the air force which deviates from its normal flights. We have been told that the Russians send over mother ships or factory ships and that a number of small vessels are disembowelled from the ships in order to prosecute our fisheries. Apparently the 60 to 70-foot long boats are disembowelled from the great mother ships. This is a concept similar to one used by the Portuguese; they send out fleets of small boats. This is how our resources are being depleted.

Let me inform the Minister of External Affairs that the result of all this is being felt in the homes of many of our people. They are forced to endure a type of poverty and hardship as a direct result of over-fishing by foreign nations. This is what is happening. We all know that thousands of families which used to depend on the Labrador fisheries have had to resort to welfare this year. They can no longer go down to the sea because the Russians cleaned out all the resources on the Hamilton Inlet Bank.

The minister expects the fishermen and members of the House to sit back and take this kind of thing. I hope if there is any backbone or spine attached to office of external affairs in this nation the minister will stand in his place and give us some idea of Canada's position regarding overfishing by foreign nationals off our shores. If we cannot get that, we must assume we are being sold down the drain by this minister. We have to assume this is a form of treason against our people and our country. If the minister is not willing to take this kind of aggressive action, that is the conclusion I must come to as a member from the Atlantic region.

[Mr. Sharp.]

I should like to hear a better rebuttal of the charges we have made. I should like to hear some better rebuttal of the presentation to the committee on fisheries than we have heard from the minister. If we do not hear such a rebuttal we will have to manifest our aggression here. We cannot sit back and take this kind of nonsense any longer.

The Deputy Chairman: Is the committee ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Lundrigan: Are we not going to get some response from the Secretary of State for External Affairs?

An hon. Member: Sit down.

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

An hon. Member: Let him talk.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Chairman, I should like to continue with a few remarks, and I am sure some of my colleagues would want to make further remarks tomorrow on this problem.

An hon. Member: You have already made three speeches today.

Mr. Lundrigan: Perhaps I will make five more speeches before this is all over. We have several hours left before the hour of the guillotine at seven o'clock tomorrow. There is plenty of time. We in Newfoundland have existed since 1497. We have hung on for a long number of years and we are prepared to hang on for a little longer. I should like to challenge the minister, not tonight at two minutes to ten but tomorrow when the bill comes up again for further debate, to give us at least a brief resumé of Canada's position in respect of marine resources.

I should like him to tell us the nature of the discussions between the Prime Minister and representatives of the Soviet Union. I am sure this is a matter that keeps him so uptight he is not able to sleep properly when he retires after his busy day's work. I am sure he is concerned about the Atlantic fisheries. I should like the minister to give us some idea of what he has prepared to present to the Law of the Sea conference in 1973. The minister said tonight Canada has already decided its position. Could we at least have some inkling of our attitude toward ICNAF?

The hon. member for St. John's East was wondering if in fact it is necessary for us to continue allegiance to ICNAF when we are not getting co-operation from member nations such as Denmark, which is harvesting our salmon on the high seas in spite of years and years of protestation. Is it worth while seriously considering a continuation of our association with this international commission when we are not getting co-operation?

We want to know whether the Canadian government plans to invest any more funds in practical research on Atlantic fisheries. We were told today that charts used by an Atlantic fish firm, whose representatives appeared