

*Government Orders*

Council. It is really the regulations which will determine the scope of the law. If the regulations are too lax, the law as worded is dangerously open to abuse.

The bill in itself is not bad, but what seem less attractive are the motivations for it.

The government is giving fishermen a target, namely foreigners. When the cod stocks started to decline, some said that the increase in the seal population was mainly responsible. After all the twists and turns we have been through, scientists now tell us that seals are only one predator among many. Since the scapegoat is no longer there, another one must be found! What better than foreigners? Let us gladly hide the real problems behind the wicked foreigners. In the meantime, we do not talk about what will happen to the fishing industry after May 16. In the meantime, fishermen forget that the federal government was responsible for managing the stocks and that it is mostly to blame.

According to NAFO, barely 5 per cent of the cod stocks are in the nose and tail of the Grand Banks where the illegal fishing is now going on and about which this government is making so much fuss. We wonder why the minister is making such an issue of it. Does the government realize that it is politicking instead of solving the real underlying problem?

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans itself recognizes that it is practically impossible to estimate the cost of illegal fishing. What I am saying is that we should be discussing the fisheries of the future instead. The seals have always been there and the stocks did not collapse. Foreigners have always fished some of our stocks and our stocks did not collapse as they have now. Our whole industry must be rethought and quickly, because many people are idle and frustrated. These are capable people. Seafaring people are resourceful, but the government does not listen to them.

However, the traditional management imposed by the federal government disdains local initiatives for solving the problems of the fishing industry. Indeed, this is not the first big crisis of the fishing industry. I repeat what I already said, and I think it is important to repeat it. In the early 1970s, cod stocks were in almost the same state as they are today, but the resourceful fishermen then turned to crab fishing. A little later, in the late 1970s, with the collapse of haddock fishing in the Gulf, some fishermen turned to shrimp.

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I gather from this that these maritime communities can adjust when allowed to interact. They can signal the presence of other, less popular species that can then be marketed. But this requires rapid channels of communication between decision-makers and the people on the front line, namely the fishermen. Quebec lost the opportunity for feedback in 1982, when the then Liberal

government repatriated the fisheries jurisdiction. It is about time, in my opinion, that the federal government opened its eyes.

I have another, more recent example. In 1986, this feedback mechanism would have allowed inshore fishermen, who were the first to notice the decline of cod stocks, to adjust. While cod stocks were in decline, other species wrongly seen as unfit should have been made more attractive.

I want to reiterate that my motto on fisheries throughout this session will be this: A valid industrial policy on fisheries can only be consistent if the provinces share in the management of resources. The vulnerability of Quebec and the other provinces with respect to fisheries is due to the fact that the most decisive powers in this area are held by the federal government.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans should talk about a new partnership between the various stakeholders in this sector. He should talk about the steps he intends to take to put fishermen in Canada and Quebec back to work. What tools will he give maritime communities to help them pull through?

Where I come from, we have a saying: "If you give a man a fish, you will feed him for one day, but if you teach him how to fish, you will feed him for life". I think it is also a Chinese proverb. We are very cultured in the Gaspé, are we not?

What tool should we use to enable former fishermen to find a new path? Similarly, what tool will we use to diversify this industry so that it can live through the next stock variation cycles? As I was saying during the election campaign, "A local problem calls for a local solution". The real solutions will not come, I am sorry to say, from Ottawa.

Today, because of the federal government's management mistakes, these communities are seeing their world turned upside down. Their lives will never be the same. They must find a new way of life. This revolution requires the various governments to provide maritime communities with new development tools.

The fishing world is undergoing massive changes and it would be an insult to all fishermen to unduly target illegal fishing or smugglers. We hope that this bill is not part of a plan to obscure reality and cloud the real debate on the fisheries' future. We support this bill, as I said earlier, but we hope it will be amended. Most of all, we are in favour of the government assuming its responsibilities and facing the crisis in a sector that is vital to many Quebecers and Canadians. That, Mr. Speaker, is something I have yet to see.

In closing, I would like to reiterate—because I have been talking a lot—the few questions I want to ask the government. I would like the government to answer these questions; I do not know how, but it should be able to respond before tabling the final draft of its bill.