

Supply

Would the Minister at least guarantee that the 'No net loss' policy he accepts will be site specific, that is, it will not be used to trade off habitat in one area for enhancement in another? Will the Minister ensure that the policy is open, so that the public will know in advance what it is getting and what it is losing under any specific proposal? Will the Minister further guarantee that the public will be able to suggest changes in proposals before they are adopted as final?

The Minister responded:

—every time there is an economic project which could have significant impact on the fishery, I can assure the Hon. Member that there will be a public process whereby all sectors will have the opportunity to put forward their views.

This ignores completely the specific question that I asked. I asked whether there would be public input so that the public could examine the specific proposals for exchange so that it would know what it was getting in return for what it was losing. The Minister talked about a vague process by which the public might be informed and have a chance at some point to make its views known.

Presently, in the Cowichan estuary they are talking about this kind of trade off. I wrote and asked for the details. The Minister's response, in a letter which came to me on January 9, 1984, was:

Rest assured that you will be forwarded details of the agreement when it has been finalized.

In other words, there will not be any kind of public participation in the "no net loss" policy. It will be a decision that is made behind closed doors, and the people of B.C., very rightly, suspect that it will involve sell-out after sell-out.

A second factor, which has to be part of any positive approach to the fishery, is the Salmonid Enhancement Program. We want to see phase two of this proceed. We would like to see an immediate allocation of some \$200 million to deal with necessary projects that can begin to come onstream. This is important for two reasons. First, we must get away from the idea that the industry can somehow be saved when the habitat has been allowed to deteriorate to the extent it has. The habitat must be built up and some of the losses that have taken place over the last number of years must be regained. The emphasis should be on natural enhancement, and we should remove ourselves from the big hatchery approach that was so favoured by the Department a few years ago in the hope that it would be the answer.

It seems obvious that all sides of the House are recognizing something which the NDP said earlier, that the importance of small stream enhancement must be recognized. In the large hatcheries there is a mix of stocks, and when these are intercepted some small stocks can be completely wiped out as a result of being mixed in with the larger stocks from hatcheries. Hatcheries are not the answer. We need a comprehensive enhancement program that will develop every possible stream and river in British Columbia so that our habitat is maximized instead of allowing the kind of phoney trade-offs that the Minister envisages under the "no net loss" policy.

With respect to the immediate need for some projects, let me stress that salmonid enhancement and stream enhancement should be a continuing part of the industry. Some of the jobs that might be lost in the actual catching of fish must be found again in such projects as salmonid enhancement.

● (1650)

Just last month I received a letter from a young fisherman who had been told that there was money available for fishermen who did not qualify for unemployment insurance, for the Salmonid Enhancement Program or for other projects. He wrote:

I have tried repeatedly to get some facts on these projects to no avail. Before Christmas I was told these projects would start in January. Today when I contacted the Employment Development Branch in Bastion Square I was told none of these projects would start until the end of February! You can imagine my frustration! What good are projects starting then just before fishing season opens. I want to do work now. I require funds to see me through until fishing season opens and also to do maintenance work on my boat so I can go fishing and make my livelihood.

This is the kind of desperate situation many fishermen are in. They did not make enough money or were unable to work enough weeks last year to qualify for UIC. They would like to work on projects which would build up the resource, but those projects are just not available.

When we inquired, we found out that there was some \$15 million made available for projects across Canada for fishermen who failed to qualify for unemployment insurance in 1983. British Columbia received \$1,900,000 of that, and the rest of it went to eastern Canada. This illustrates the neglect of the British Columbia resource in favour of the resource in eastern Canada.

A third element in a positive approach has to be emphasis upon a voluntary buy-back program. We do not want to see people commandeered out of their livelihoods. Let us begin by having a voluntary buy-back. That should eliminate some 20 per cent to 25 per cent of fishermen, many of whom are very anxious right now to get out of the industry.

There has been a fair number of questions raised about the whole Indian fishery. Certainly we on this side of the House support Indian participation in the commercial fishery. We recognize the need for special measures to restore the historic level of that participation. In my own case, I am very aware of the way in which Indian fishermen were squeezed out of the industry by the buy-back and licensing program of the Liberal Government in the early 1970s under Jack Davis, when he was Minister of Fisheries. Of course, right now he is a Sacred back-bencher, along with other Liberals and Conservatives in British Columbia.

Measures to enlarge Indian participation and to restore it to its historic level should be taken in consultation with other sectors of the industry. We recognize aboriginal rights to the resource. We absolutely support that. However, the burden must not be placed entirely upon one segment of society. The burden has to be borne by society at large. We recognize that in other aboriginal rights settlements. Certainly it should apply in any recognition of aboriginal rights of Indian people to fishery resources and to the resources of the ocean. The burden of any claim settlement has to be borne by Canadian society at large instead of just removing it from the people already involved in the fishing industry.