

Supply

It is very important to realize that what is happening now in the fisheries is not the government's fault. It is the fault of a system which for years has been very poorly supervised. When we talk about overfishing by foreign boats inside or outside the 200-mile limit, we must not forget that Canadians also overfished in those areas. We must not forget that when we wanted to restrain the increase in the number of seals, these same people who are telling us that it is the government's fault were there telling us to do nothing.

I believe it is a biological phenomenon which is very hard to control and honestly I cannot believe that it is my government's fault if the resource within the 200-mile limit or the Gulf of St. Lawrence is at such a low level.

• (1340)

In any case, I would ask the hon. member who asked me the question to read the notes, since she left the House before I finished my statement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Resuming debate. I am quite prepared to recognize the hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, but I would point out to him that five minutes remain of the 20 allocated to his party. The hon. member for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Mr. Darryl L. Gray (Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine): I do not know if five minutes will be enough, Mr. Speaker. I would prefer to have 10 minutes, as someone who has chosen to live in the Magdalen Islands. In any case, I will try to make my point as briefly as possible.

[*English*]

I had the privilege a few minutes ago to meet with Mr. Cashin and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Without speaking on behalf of the minister or on behalf of Mr. Cashin, one thing that we did agree on is that problem of the northern cod should not be a partisan political area. We should work together on it.

I am sure I will get agreement from the other side of the House that there are three problems. First, there is the problem of northern cod on the nose and the tail of the Grand Banks. That is, the problem with external affairs in the foreign fishing. Second, there is the problem of our overfishing in our own waters, which has been addressed to the satisfaction of some fishermen but

not to others. Third, there is the problem of our seal herd.

I get very touchy when we talk about seals. I am an old seal hunter. I believe that with the herd of seals we have in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off Newfoundland, off the Madeleine Islands, after having met with Mr. Cashin and the minister of fisheries, we have to go through, like it or lump it, our external diplomacy, international etiquette, call it whatever you wish. It is frustrating for the fishermen, but we have to do that. We cannot run out with the gunboats.

Even from a Madeleine Islander's point of view, I would hope that Newfoundlanders would not go out with their fishing boats and lose their lives to try to make an example of a Portuguese or a Spaniard who is over there fishing. I would hope that we could have a little bit of patience and see what will happen.

I am assured that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, with the good advice of Mr. Cashin and other Newfoundlanders, will take appropriate action if we do not get action from the foreign side.

Regarding the restraint that has been asked of the fishermen with the reduction in the quotas, the government side has had to be responsible for the loss of revenue of the people involved. If it is not good enough it should be improved. Again, I would ask the opposite side and my colleagues in the government that we make it the least painful as possible for the fishermen.

In the four minutes that I have left I wish to talk about seals.

[*Translation*]

When I was elected on September 4, 1984, I met with my friends, the Magdalen Islanders, who told me that under the former government—and I am not getting into partisan politics here, Mr. Speaker—they said to me, "How come those damn Greenpeacers are shocked, which means that we will lose money because we can no longer hunt seals?"

I took a stand in 1984 and I have not changed my position since. I fully agree with the seal hunt. We should never forget that hunting seals, just like hunting deer or moose in Newfoundland or Labrador, or hunting partridge or whatever is an important activity. It is very