

*Adjournment Debate*

matter with his Ministers. As indicated by the Prime Minister, a serious option is to go before the Supreme Court. I can assure the Hon. Member that this matter is under active consideration and that a decision should be announced very shortly.

FISHERIES—GREAT LAKES SPORTS FISHING—IMPORTANCE TO TOURIST INDUSTRY. (B) MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie):** Mr. Speaker, I rose in the House a few days ago to pose a question to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané) concerning the subject of enhancement of our fisheries resource in the Great Lakes. The Minister is aware, as I am, that this is only part of a larger question, the protection of our environment and conservation of our natural resources.

In my speech today I would like to touch briefly on the broader themes mentioned above and try to relate the enhancement of sports fishing to those themes. The Minister will know that Canada's reputation as a tourist attraction rests with its beautiful scenery, sparkling lakes and its clean air. It is becoming increasingly difficult to protect those resources. The dictates of economics are threatening to overwhelm the careful judgments of environmentalists. For example, the lower Niagara River is indeed a disgrace. This adversely affects the sports fishing which is the topic of my speech today.

We certainly do not wish to develop the reputation in the eyes of potential tourists as a country which is polluting itself to death. It goes without saying that environmental questions are very much linked to the tourism industry. Tourism is the largest single employer in Canada, providing jobs for over one million people in this country. Those jobs are on the line if our clean air and water are lost.

What about the acid rain question? Fish cannot live in water that is acidic. When the fish die a whole chapter of Canadian history dies with them, along with a host of companies which produce the equipment used by fishermen. For example, in Fort Erie, in my riding a fine line of fishing lures are turned out by Williams Gold Ltd. The Minister is aware of the problem, no doubt. He knows that our fisheries are being destroyed by overly acidic lakes and rivers. I would expect that he will make the appropriate representations on behalf of Canadians to ensure that the problem is looked after.

● (1845)

Sports fishing is a subject which deserves, in my opinion, much more attention on the national level. In fact, there are individuals and groups in this country who are lobbying very strongly for more positive ways of enhancing this very important sport, and I say more power to them. I just received a letter today on this very subject. The writer informed me that 95 per cent of the sports fishing stocking is done by the United States states bordering on the Great Lakes.

I am a fisherman myself and believe that there certainly are many ways to go about enhancing our sports fishing industry in this country, thereby indirectly improving our potential for attracting those very elusive tourist dollars which we need in

our country and indeed which seem to be slipping away into the United States because of the higher costs of vacationing in Canada. For example, gasoline is almost double the price here. Therefore, our fishing will have to be pretty good. We must make a concerted effort to publicize the fact that the Great Lakes sports fishery is a resource representing excellent recreational facilities.

With regard to the onshore facilities, provisions must be made to accommodate boats, trailers, and recreational vehicles in areas close to lakes and rivers with good sports fishing potential. Breakwaters must be built to protect marinas and appropriate markings placed for navigation. The onshore facilities are all for nought if a varied and healthy fishery is not present to attract anglers to the improved and expanded facilities which I have described. This should include hatchery facilities and equipment and manpower to undertake comprehensive stocking and restocking of our lakes. The federal Government should work with the provinces to encourage and assist in the restocking which is so imperative. All this takes money, but most of all it takes the political will of committed people at all levels of government.

I will be interested in hearing the response to my question in which I asked the Minister to identify any new programs which would enhance sports fishing on the Great Lakes. I would hope that any new programs would contain the elements I have mentioned. If not, I trust that he would give my suggestions serious thought, given that we are dealing with a resource of tremendous potential, if wisely used.

In conclusion, I call upon the Government to consider seriously means to improve the situation for Canadians and visiting fishermen alike. Briefly, such measures should include monitoring and preserving the quality of our air and water, expansion of facilities to accommodate tourists and tax cuts to ensure that prices are reasonable, and improved conservation and enhancement of our fisheries resources. By actively pursuing these goals, we can improve the quality of life not only for visitors but for those of us who are fortunate enough to live in this beautiful country, to enjoy the outdoors and to enjoy fishing.

**Mr. Maurice Harquail (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to the question of the Hon. Member for Erie (Mr. Fretz). He has always struck me as being a Member who is sincere about his work. He has not disappointed me at all this evening. Personally, I share his concerns about sports fishing because of its great importance in the Atlantic area, certainly up in the Restigouche area which I have the honour to represent. The mighty Restigouche River and the Atlantic salmon which come up it to spawn and other activities which include sports fishing have been of a personal interest to me for years.

I am delighted to see that the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker), is present in the House. I know he supports me in what I will have to say. Hon. Members