

*Fisheries Improvement Loans Act*

recruit and pay the staff and the government would pay the agency a contract rate, but the rate was so low that the staff would not stay. This meant the continuity of research projects could not be maintained. In the end, there was no point in doing the research. Not only were the people assigned to the task on a contract basis frustrated, but so were those directing the program.

What we need is a clear commitment to research. I see that as an investment. I separate investment from spending here, Mr. Speaker. Spending provides a service and that can be judged as positive or negative, while investment returns income. Investment in the fishing industry, investment in the enhancement program and investment in research will ultimately return substantial income to the people who live on the west coast of Canada.

Another aspect of the situation is the technical base that is required. We need people to run the hatcheries and to lead the move to upgrade the salmon producing habitat. Staff recruited by an agency in Vancouver for the hatcheries are not always suitable. They are on contract and are paid something just above the minimum wage. As a result, they are ready to leave at a moment's notice if something else turns up. We would be better to make an investment and train a group of individuals to run hatcheries who would be available if the program is expanded. Instead, the enthusiasm of the dedicated people we have is being diminished. I know my colleagues from British Columbia would be pleased to hear a response from the government on this aspect of the question. There does not seem to be any point in investing in this area unless the spade work is done.

My next concern is conservation. There is no point in building fishing vessels unless we look after the place where the fish live. Before I came to this House, the former Bill C-38 had been hailed as bringing a new era in conservation and fish habitat protection. The government has encountered some difficulty in enforcing the provisions of that legislation, however. If the fish habitat is destroyed, the stocks will disappear. A continuing source of wealth for British Columbians will be destroyed and this will bring social change to the whole coast of British Columbia.

Strong legislation is needed and to this end I would urge the Department of Fisheries to enforce the provisions of Bill C-38. There seems to be a lack of will to take care of the habitat which will result in a loss not only to this generation but to future generations. My children and their children have as much right to that resource as does the present generation, but unless we protect it, it will be lost to them.

There is also a problem with estuaries, Mr. Speaker, and the tremendous competitive demand for land. This is an old story. Estuary land in British Columbia is being gobbled up because it is more productive than other farm land. Estuaries are being used as municipal sewage dumps or as log booming grounds, even when there are alternatives available. The estuaries are more productive as farm land, so there really should not be competition for use. I urge the government to join with the province of British Columbia to negotiate a strong coast zone

management law. This seems to have worked in the state of Washington. We cannot continue to wreck this resource of British Columbia's estuaries by continuing to use them as booming grounds. If we do, they will be useless within 20 years. If we are to practice conservation, a coastal zone management law must be introduced in co-operation with the province of British Columbia.

I do not want to dwell on the question of openings and closings, Mr. Speaker. At the present time an area will suddenly be opened, the whole fleet will race to it, then a couple of big seiners go in, smack it a couple of times and next thing, it is closed. This distorts the allocation procedure and, indeed, can put a lot of people out of business. Unless we are vigilant now the situation will get out of hand. Since the resource belongs to all the people, I wonder if it is legitimate for the Department of Fisheries, under tremendous pressure from different competing groups, to make the decision on this. Or should the ultimate decision on the way fish are allocated be set by Parliament, the province of British Columbia or by the people on the west coast of Canada? We need direction for the fisheries department. This is something they need. They are under tremendous pressure and are trying to rationalize this insane procedure. Down the road many people are going to be hurt by this lack of direction unless some action is taken very soon.

● (1550)

I return now to allocation in the management of resources. This must be a nightmare to the department and to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. We see a problem with allocation between the commercial fishery, the sport fishery and the Indian fishery. Within the commercial fishery we see a tremendous competition for gear type, the seiners, the net fishermen, the trawlers; these people are all fighting for their share.

The situation has gone so far that one can never rationalize it. Most people say it is impossible to rationalize without hurting a lot of people. However, the longer one waits and the more you put in the fisheries improvement loans—to encourage people to put new seiners in the water and overcapitalize those vessels, before asking this institution to take some action on that—the more people you are going to hurt and the more you will endanger the resource. It is a very serious situation.

The question of the Indian fishery is one of allocation. A beautiful comment was made yesterday by one of my friends in the Conservative party; it was a slip of the tongue, but it was very relevant. He suggested that we needed a white policy paper in the fishing industry. I suggest that we do have a white policy paper at the present time, but what we may need is an Indian policy paper.

My riding is home to many Indian people who live in Indian communities. The only economic base is the fishing industry. There is a need for access to that resource. One cannot keep hiding in the bushes on this issue, they have to have meaningful access. It is their only hope. But one cannot just give them access to the resource; a mechanism has to be put together by