

the throne speech it is for a number of reasons. It is because those Liberals from Atlantic Canada have been working long and hard thrashing out a fisheries policy, discussing, persuading, convincing. It is because we have a Minister of Environment and Fisheries who is extremely competent, able and far sighted. It is because the Liberal parties in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, have ensured that fisheries get a prominent place in national policy. And it is because we have a responsible and responsive government which realizes the value of the fishery to this country, particularly at this time when there is a food supply problem. These policies are Liberal policies, Mr. Speaker, and it is a Liberal government that has recognized the importance of the fishery not only to Atlantic Canada but to the whole country.

The editorial sums up those statements of policy in the Throne Speech which apply to the fishery:

The improvements are aimed at the modernization of the inshore and offshore and the provision of ice boats and gear to make them multipurpose and the provision of ice-making plants to assist in improving the quality of the catch. Harbour facilities will be improved and updated and incentives will be provided to encourage the fishing effort in the direction of species and areas which are underexploited.

There will, of course, be immediate short term effects which will assist the fishermen to bring their boats up to the new standards and to help them meet the new quality controls which are in the offing but the real objective appears to be the development of the total fishing effort to take advantage of any concession which might come from the Law of the Sea Conference.

Environment Minister Jack Davis is quite convinced Canada will get management control of the continental shelf and the government must be accepting his optimism to give so much attention to the fishery in the Throne Speech.

There was a time when people said that this is Jack Davis's policy—this is a time when Jack Davis is speaking for himself. I think it is quite clear that this is no longer true. The policy we have and are enunciating at the Law of the Sea Conference, a policy which will give Canada control of her continental shelf to a minimum of 200 and possibly a maximum of 400 miles, is Liberal policy accepted by Liberals across Canada and espoused and defended by this government.

But the most eloquent symbol, Mr. Speaker, is the dollar sign. Money talks and the language in so far as spending on the fisheries is concerned, is impressive. Environment will be spending almost \$6 million in Newfoundland on environment and fisheries in the coming year. I am pleased but I am not satisfied. It is not enough, particularly for the small craft harbour program.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rompkey: This is a program for which those of us from Atlantic Canada fought very hard, and I think with a great deal of success.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rompkey: Wharves, breakwaters and harbour improvements are an urgent necessity for inshore fishermen and there just is not enough money to do what needs to be done. We have doubled the budget for small craft harbours over the past year. We are spending more than

we have for some time. Commendable as this is, it is still not enough.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that fisheries were given prominence in the Throne Speech and that measures are to be introduced to help fishermen improve their facilities and increase their catch. But let me deal with some of the problems that remain with the fishery, particularly in Newfoundland.

The catches of inshore fishermen in Newfoundland are continuously declining. Generally, the landed value is rising because of better prices. But, particularly in vulnerable places like the northeast coast of Newfoundland and the Labrador coast, where the season is necessarily short and the effect of offshore fishing particularly damaging, fishermen are becoming very discouraged by catch failure. Moreover, those who have invested in longliners are faced with debts that they cannot foresee paying, unless the pattern of fishing changes. The policy of improving assistance to fishermen so that they may provide themselves with better equipped and more flexible boats is extremely important. Many of our inshore fishermen will want to go where the fish are, and there must be ways and means of helping them to do so.

Another means of protecting the catch of inshore fishermen on the coast is to place a moratorium on fishing by the offshore fishing vessels, particularly on the spawning ground for groundfish on the northeast coast of Newfoundland, to the coast of Labrador. A restriction on fishing these grounds for a period by the larger vessels would increase the catch of inshore fishermen. These are the people who are the most vulnerable; these are the people we have to think about most. The merchants and firms who operate the offshore fishery have been getting help from the government, but to a certain degree they are able to look after themselves. It is the little man in the small boat about whom we must be concerned, and to him we must address our policies.

But the inadequacy of their particular unemployment insurance plan is the reason many inshore fishermen are quitting and finding jobs elsewhere. The fact is that all other workers are much better protected against unemployment than the fishermen, so fishermen are opting for other jobs, both temporary and permanent, where they get a steady income and a better deal if they lose their job.

What fishermen want is to be equal, to get benefits equivalent to those of other workers from the unemployment insurance plan. Fishermen want to be equal to other workers in terms of unemployment insurance benefits and they deserve to be. They are our primary producers, providing us with much needed food. They work hard, very hard, and they deserve help and protection for themselves and their families during the off-season. I was pleased to note, Mr. Speaker, that changes will be made in the Unemployment Insurance Act in this session. We are now busy drafting the necessary modifications to give fishermen equality with other workers in unemployment insurance benefits. We in the Liberal party are aware of the problem. It is a complex problem but we are working hard to come up with a solution.

The department will be making proposals to Manpower on behalf of fishermen. The thrust of these proposals will be to make fishermen equivalent, to give them an equal