

The Address—Mr. Skelly

visiting them in small groups in an attempt to explain the vital importance of this issue not only to them as participants in the industry, to their colleagues or to the processing operations, but to every coastal community. I would urge every Member of Parliament to make an effort at least to listen to them.

I believe this happened when the farmers came to Ottawa to lobby. Members were able to understand their plight after they listened. They made a commitment to contact the responsible Minister and other influential members in order to arrive at an equitable solution based on some meaningful consultation.

In speaking on the Throne Speech debate today, my first appeal would be that Members of Parliament make an extra effort to listen, understand and make commitments to those people who represent so many British Columbians who are in such a desperate situation today rather than opting for this unilateral approach to solving this problem. That would cause great harm and dislocation and probably concentrate the control of this resource-based industry upon which we all depend in the hands of a very privileged few. Essentially, this concentration will ultimately go to the Japanese trading companies that ultimately control so many of our resources in a negative way in the Province of British Columbia.

One of the most important issues currently under discussion is that of fleet reduction. This is what Jack Davis did that led to the original failure. This failure occurred because there was no consultation to try to achieve a consensus among user groups, the departments, the communities and businesses that depend on the industry.

It is important to note that it appears as though the Minister is heading for a unilateral imposition of a fleet reduction plan. It seems that he is still contemplating the idea of expropriating vessels beyond that. Members of the NDP are not prepared to tolerate that approach and I think other Members of the House should impress this adverse impact upon the Minister. Members have given very important advice to the Minister about how to proceed with that fleet reduction program.

While we would support a fleet reduction program since it would certainly leave more room for individuals to make a decent income, the Minister must follow certain criteria in implementing that program. First, there must be a consensus on the approach taken to that reduction. It should not be through expropriation. Those bona fide fishermen who have traditionally been in the industry must have the option to remain in it. I suggest it is contrary to the spirit of our country suddenly to expropriate a vessel from someone who has been traditionally in the industry when there are meaningful and effective alternatives available.

Before any change is implemented there must be a final plan in mind. For instance, definite reductions must take place in certain areas. The federal Government must provide full funding for this project. I am unalterably opposed to a royalty since it appears that Peter Pearse, the individual who conducted the commission on the West Coast fishing industry, wanted to use the royalty not only to raise funds for a buy-back but to drive people out of the industry and into bankruptcy. During these difficult times a further burden should not be placed on

fishermen and since the federal Government created this problem there is an obligation on the part of the country to resolve it.

This must be a progressive change since any immediate imposition would cause horrendous dislocation of people's employment and community economic bases. Once a plan is decided upon it must be implemented slowly in order to prevent any dislocation.

If the buy-back proposal proceeds, the Government must make two commitments. One is to maintain the employment base so that no one loses employment. The second commitment is that coastal communities such as Alert Bay, Sointula, Port Hardy, Klemtu, Bella Bella and Bella Coola must be guaranteed that they still will be able to contain their economic base. Communities such as Campbell River, Powell River, Gibsons or Pender Harbour will be irreparably harmed if the entire fleet concentrates at two points on the coast, Prince Rupert and Vancouver. These are the criteria that form part of this buy-back program which must be achieved by consensus. There must be agreement on a final structure and it must be proceeded with in a way which will not cause irreparable harm.

I see that we are approaching one o'clock and I would appreciate an opportunity to continue when the House resumes after the recess.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

NATIONAL REVENUE

DEPARTMENT'S TREATMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA TAXPAYERS

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, in the past few weeks this House has seen revealed the aggressive, oppressive tax grabbing practices of Revenue Canada. According to a press report, the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Bussières) said yesterday that people facing financial problems because they are being pursued for back taxes are getting what they deserve.

One of my constituents, a Mrs. Madeleine Snell, of Fort Langley, B.C., writes: "Five and one-half years ago, my husband suffered a nervous breakdown and depression. Since that time we have suffered severe financial difficulties and have