

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 25, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

FISHERIES

CRAB FISHING LICENCES SOUGHT FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND FISHERMEN

Mr. Mel Gass (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring to the attention of the House the problem faced by Prince Edward Island fishermen in obtaining crab licences. The crab fishery was established off the coast of Prince Edward Island in the early 1970s, but over the years Island fishermen lost their right to hold licences for crab. The P.E.I. fishermen and the provincial Department of Fisheries have tried, in vain, to obtain crab licences from the federal Department of Fisheries.

One month ago the Department of Fisheries on Prince Edward Island sent a telex to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans asking whether Prince Edward Island could receive inshore licences for Zone 7 off the coast of eastern P.E.I. should it be closed to the offshore crab fishery. They have not received a reply from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, nor have they received an acknowledgement of their telex.

On May 15 the federal Government announced its management plan for the offshore crab fishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Under this plan it did close Zone 7 to the offshore crab fishery. P.E.I. fishermen are hoping that they will now be able to obtain inshore crab licences. It is certainly the right of Island fishermen to have the opportunity to fish crab, as the crab fishery was established on Prince Edward Island.

I urge the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to realize the frustrations the Island fishermen feel, as fishermen from other provinces fish crab within eyesight of the shores of P.E.I., have good catches, land them on P.E.I. docks, load them onto their trucks, and transport them to other provinces for processing. Mr. Speaker, I insist that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans award crab licences to Prince Edward Island fishermen.

THE MAGNA CARTA

REFLECTIONS PROMPTED BY HAMILTON EXHIBITION

Mr. Stanley Hudecki (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the occasion of the first display in Canada, at McMaster University art gallery in Hamilton, of one of the four handwritten copies of the Magna Carta, and the only one with King John's seal, provokes some thoughtful reflections. It was in 1215, almost 770 years ago, that King John signed the document that granted the King's subjects certain liberties, and which restrained the powers of the King himself within well defined limits.

The passage of the Magna Carta was a watershed event in the recognition of human rights. It originated at a time when the land was ruled by a feudal aristocracy. This document has become the most important single document in the development of constitutional and legal freedoms, not only in Britain but in many countries of the Commonwealth, and in the United States.

This great Charter of English liberties, granted under threat of civil war, is a symbol and a battle cry opposing oppression. Each successive generation has, in it, a protection of its own civil liberties. For this reason I would like to express the great honour which all Hamiltonians feel in being entrusted with this historic document for a period of two weeks.

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PENITENTIARIES

INMATES' PRIVILEGES—OPPOSITION TO EXTENSION OF ELECTORAL FRANCHISE

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, there is a move afoot by the bleeding hearts to amend the Canada Elections Act to permit prisoners in federal correctional institutions to vote.

Right now prisoners have a better life than hundreds of Canadians who are paying taxes. They have better food than those living on welfare, and even more choice than the workers in the below poverty jobs.

They have special trailers for conjugal visits of wives and even common-law wives, and now there is a rumour this will be extended to girl friends.

They have free medical and dental care, and access to guidance counsellors. They enjoy the best of pool tables, gymnasiums, and sports equipment. Scores of taxpayers do not enjoy such facilities and services. However, the bleeding hearts