

Atlantic Fisheries Restructuring Act

held to our heads by the majority which runs the country in the name of the Liberal Government.

I hope that no one on the Government side would construe our statements on this Bill as an over-all agreement to this socialistic legislation. As I said a moment ago, our position is taken as a result of the dire straits faced by some Atlantic Province Canadians due to the over-all mismanagement of our economy and specifically the over-all mismanagement of our fishing industry by the Government. There appears to be no other alternative for them at the present time. This is really a Bill which provides short-term gain for long-term pain. But hopefully it will get our fishermen in some areas through this winter of discontent and hardship. That is basically what they are facing at the present time. As the fishermen say—and Lord knows I have heard them say it many times, when faced with a broker—let's pray we have better luck next time. In my opinion it would be very unfair to rob them of that hope which in many areas is all they have left.

● (1630)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Questions, comments? Debate.

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on third reading of Bill C-170. I want to reiterate the importance which the New Democratic Party has felt for Bill C-170 and why we have co-operated in seeing that this Bill went to committee and that it receives third reading in the House of Commons. There is no doubt in the minds of anybody in Atlantic Canada, and hopefully nobody in the House of Commons, about the urgency this Bill requires. Basically it is because we have an industry in Atlantic Canada which employs an important component of the work force there. It is an industry that meets the employment requirements for thousands and thousands of people and hundreds of communities.

When we decided we would support this Bill going through the House reasonably rapidly we did so with some reservations, because we did not have all the facts that we would liked to have had in dealing with a major expenditure of money and a restructuring of the entire Atlantic fishery we were cautious. The urgency with which the Bill must be dealt, and the late date on which it has been introduced in the House has still not convinced us that we have had an ample opportunity to look at all the implications of the Bill. We do realize that fishermen, particularly in Newfoundland, and in those major companies in Nova Scotia, are dependent upon settling some collective bargaining negotiations. The new companies will have to settle some marketing strategies to sell the product which the fishermen will be catching in a few months' time. Under those terms we agreed to look at the Bill.

In the meantime quite a bit of information came to light. In the committee we looked at the Newfoundland agreement. We have heard something about the Nova Scotia agreement and some of the reservations which the Nova Scotia Government has had. We have looked at the bail out of a major bank, the

Bank of Nova Scotia. We have seen some amendments to the Bill that we in the New Democratic Party do not like.

It has been interesting to see the Progressive Conservative Party attempt to wrap itself around the Bill and divorce itself from the Bill. Not only did the Hon. Member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) do this but his colleagues in provincial Government of Nova Scotia who on the one hand do not want this Bill because they claim it is a nationalization of the industry, a socialist plot to take over the industry, and who on the other hand, are hoping the federal Government will use its majority to see this Bill goes through. If the Bill is not passed, then a major part of the Nova Scotia fishing industry will not be functioning and there will be major unemployment in that already high unemployment area. It is interesting to see how the Progressive Conservatives on the one hand can support the Bill and on the other hand give us all kinds of reasons why they should not, and why they are so anxious to get this Bill through. It is interesting to note that these two new companies are going to put some stability in the East Coast fishing industry.

There is one amendment which the Conservatives and the Liberals support. Once we have injected all this money, the \$138 million initially, the \$100 million in guarantees and the major bail-out of the Bank of Nova Scotia, it is interesting to note that the amendment moved by the Government would find that when those companies become profitable—not only the companies that become profitable but any portion of a company that becomes profitable—they shall be disposed of by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. De Bané) and returned to the private sector. In other words, once the Government and the public of Canada pumps money into these corporations, once they provide a stable funding mechanism to put some equity into these companies and once they become profitable, we will turn them back to private industry. I do not think the fishermen and the shore workers in the communities in Newfoundland in particular really want that to happen. Privatization of the industry should not be in the Bill that it shall happen. Communities such as Grand Bank, Burin, St. Anthony, St. Lawrence, Ramea and a number of others in Newfoundland, over the last year have seen their community completely without adequate work in terms of the fishing industry. People will question the rationale of supporting a community through public expenditure to salvage jobs, to give some security to those communities, only to turn around when the community and the fishing enterprise becomes profitable, starts to contribute and starts to bring up the wages and incomes of fishermen and shore workers and return it to the private sector. I do not think, nor does the New Democratic Party think, that those communities will want to go back to private sector hands with the uncertainty that generates.

What the Bill will do if the Government follows the letter of the law—and let us not forget there is a possibility sometime in the far future when we might get a Progressive Conservative Government—is that I am sure the Government would not hesitate at any stage to turn those money-earning enterprises back to the private sector. What they would do is to maintain