

*Government Organization*

even to this government, and on December 21, 1978, the minister, in a press release containing the kind of double talk to which we have become accustomed from this government, stated that he had completed his review of cutbacks in fisheries technological development programs and said he had no intention of reducing essential fisheries research. I ask the minister, when he replies in this debate, as I am sure he will, to define to the fishermen of Canada and to the people of Canada his interpretation of the meaning of the word "essential".

He has stated that the fisheries technological laboratories at Halifax and Vancouver would not be closed down, which I submit is comparable to telling the crew of a ship: "Have no fear, your ship will sail, the only difference being that there will be a few changes; there will be no captain, mate, cook, bosun or engineer." At Halifax, where there was a total staff of only 79, some 23 scientists will be laid off. On the west coast, where there is a staff of only 31, some 11 scientists will be dismissed. The only place where no changes are contemplated is in Newfoundland where, as I understand it, only seven scientists are employed.

At the Halifax laboratory, for example, there are at least four divisions. In the resource utilization division, 11 scientists, including the division chief, will be dismissed. This minister and this government have destroyed the division, which leaves us to ask: Just what were these scientists doing? They were studying and developing processes for utilizing fish for human consumption which would otherwise be turned into fishmeal or thrown overboard, completely discarded. They were developing new processes for mincing and flossing saltfish, new storage techniques, such as hypobarric or reduced pressure storage so that fish could be stored for longer periods. All of this important work now goes by the board.

In the chemistry division where studies were carried out on the nutritional value of fish, among other things, ten scientists will be displaced. Perhaps their most important work was on the value of marine oils to mankind. But this work is considered unimportant by this government and by the minister so three research scientists, three chemists, a biologist and three technicians will be dismissed.

The industrial development division remains untouched, but in program management two out of four of the key men presently employed will be laid off. So much for the minister's announcement.

The minister in his statement of December 21, 1978, said:

With the resurgence of the fishing industry in the past year or so, companies should now be in a position to meet these development costs themselves.

The minister seems to forget, for example, that lobster fishermen are individuals, that they generally do not own large companies and they are therefore not in a position to continue the studies of the fisheries laboratory on wet storage for lobsters, or the studies on the relationship of offshore and inshore lobster stocks, or the studies on an acceptable substitute for artificial baits for lobsters so that valuable mackerel and herring presently used for lobster bait could be sold for human consumption, thereby increasing the fishermen's income.

[Mr. Crouse.]

The actions taken by this government will seriously affect our fishermen and our secondary industry. They are in direct contradiction to the advice given to the government by the industry. I submit that this policy, which the minister stands by so firmly, should be changed. In fact, when making these changes in our scientific staff, no mechanism whatsoever has been established for the transferral of the 54 years of basic research expertise either to the provincial governments or to private industry. Some of these scientists have ten to 15 years or more of experience, and this type of know-how once lost cannot easily be regained. Some of these scientists already are planning to go to the United States out of necessity and the need to obtain employment. Their knowledge will soon be aiding our competition. These scientists were showing our individual fishermen and our secondary industry how to upgrade their product.

● (1650)

Therefore, we view this section of the minister's fisheries policy as a retrograde step which should be reconsidered. Following the next election, when we on this side form the federal government—

**Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent):** God help us.

**Mr. Crouse:** The minister did not finish his statement.

**Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent):** God help the fishermen.

**Mr. Crouse:** What he meant was: God help him and hon. members opposite. Because after the next election they will be sitting on this side of the House. When we form the next government—and believe me, we will do that—

**Mrs. Sauvé:** When will that be?

**Mr. Crouse:** The hon. minister will be able to grunt and groan when she is on this side of the House after the next election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. I suggest the hon. member should talk about Bill C-35, not the next election.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Crouse:** When we form the next government, we intend to place not less but greater emphasis on fisheries research. We believe the people on the east and west coasts, as well as the industry, deserve this type of consideration since capital expended in this manner is a form of pump priming which generates industrial expansion.

The provincial governments also have been critical of the present government's fishing policies. They have called for action as well. In November, 1977, the Atlantic premiers prepared a policy paper urging the federal government to implement a fishing vessel replacement and upgrading program in concert with the provincial governments. At that time they said the following: