

servants move to Gaspé than to make the fish go upstream to Quebec City.

In view of the decision to allow trawlers to fish inside the Gulf, I wonder if some of the fish will still be able to make it upstream as far as Quebec city. I sincerely want to warn the minister about the risks of such a decision and to tell him that I believe that, in the interests of fishermen, it would be extremely important to review this position so that those who have been making their living in this industry for several generations can still do so because such a decision is extremely depressing for future generations. It will have, as a direct consequence, an exodus of fishermen from these areas. The budgets of former ministers of fisheries were aimed at keeping in these communities the people who are only asking to go on working in this industry. I believe that if the minister continues in this direction there would be grave consequences as we would risk witnessing an exodus of fishermen and an increase in the number of unemployed elsewhere in Quebec and Canada.

I believe that this would have extremely harmful social consequences and that the first duty of the minister should be to evaluate these consequences when making any decision, whether of an economic nature or as concerns allowing groups of companies to fish in the Gulf. When we try to solve the problem of the fishing industry by using these companies in this way, we can only cause even more serious related problems in the areas of unemployment, an exodus from these communities, unemployment insurance and social welfare. Therefore, if the government really wants to help fishermen remain in their own communities and develop economically, I believe that it should go back on its decision to allow trawlers of 100 feet or more to fish in the Gulf. In any case, since I am myself newly elected, I want to transmit directly to the minister the representations made to me by individuals, not companies, individuals and co-operatives. I believe that this message has been made clear since the President of the Treasury Board is in the House, and I believe that we have heard all the facts in view of what my other colleagues from fishing constituencies have been saying since last evening. I therefore urge the government to review this decision and make an announcement as soon as possible so that we can give happier news to the fishermen.

● (1520)

[English]

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Chairman, this is the first opportunity I have had to intervene in a discussion on fisheries since the beginning of this Parliament, following the last election. I want to take the opportunity to tell the minister that of course I was disappointed with the results of the election, but when I heard he was appointed Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, I thought at least that was a ray of hope. I am afraid that ray has vanished. The minister may yet be prepared to listen, but I am afraid the rabble rouser of the previous opposition has become the pussycat of the cabinet.

Supply

Some hon. Members: Meow, meow.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): There was a good program in the Department of Fisheries for boat subsidies and the construction of small craft harbours, both of which fell victim to the hapless hacker at Treasury Board. It seems our Minister of Fisheries has been able to do little about it. In fairness I must say that during the recent provincial byelection in the province of New Brunswick, the minister was able to pry some funds loose from the Treasury Board for boat subsidies. It was not enough, not anywhere near enough, but he was able to do that to allow the Tory candidate in that provincial byelection, and the provincial minister of fisheries, to make the announcement.

An. hon. Member: He still lost the election.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): He still lost the election.

An hon. Member: I hear it was close.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Closeness only counts in the game of horseshoes. No wonder it was close. The government of New Brunswick threw all the resources of that province into that byelection in order to win it, but it could not buy the votes of the people. Unfortunately fisheries has become a political ball game. Also that is happening in the Department of Employment and Immigration where we have to wait six or seven weeks for approval of project applications, if they are not connected with provincial byelections. If they are connected with provincial byelections, they are approved within two days so that the Tory candidate can make the announcement. That is the kind of political game they are playing.

When the minister was in opposition, he was very self-righteous. He constantly criticized the former minister, the hon. member for Westmorland-Kent, who in fact was one of the capable workers on behalf of fishermen, for not having enough money in his boat subsidy and small craft budget, etc. What did this minister do? As soon as he is elected, he allows the hapless hacker to take it all away. Some of the money from the point of view of boat subsidies has been returned to fishermen, but the criteria have been changed.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I know the hon. member perhaps was inadvertent in his comment when he referred to the hapless hacker. It is the happy hacker.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I am not prepared to comment on the state of happiness or unhappiness of the minister. I know that the fishermen are concerned with his actions; they are very unhappy. I have referred to him as hapless, and I shall continue to do so.

Since the election on May 22, the government has not approved, to my knowledge, a single penny for the construction of small craft harbours. I represent a riding in which about 40 per cent of the people depend upon the fishery for their