

Anti-Inflation Act

since the last election the right hon. gentleman has been constantly criticized for not providing the necessary leadership. Editorial after editorial, commentator after commentator, both in the written and spoken media, castigated the Prime Minister and his administration for lacking guts, lacking leadership, and for failing to take action. Well, the right hon. gentleman is very conscious of his political image; so, what did he do? Even at the price of swallowing himself, he decided, suddenly, to try to show leadership by saying, "All right, we are going to impose price and wage controls." He appeared on television posing as the valiant knight—yes, Madam Speaker—as the valiant knight defending the Canadian economy. May I call it four o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. It being four o'clock, this House will now proceed to consider private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills, notices of motions and private bills. Is it agreed that order No. 8 under public bills shall stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): With the consent of the House, shall all orders under this item stand until we reach No. 51?

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, I believe there is agreement to consider item No. 51.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

● (1600)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT ACT (FISHERIES)

SUGGESTED TITLE OF DEPUTY MINISTER

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East) moved that Bill C-251, to amend the Department of the Environment Act (fisheries) be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.

He said: Madam Speaker, the purpose of this bill would to a certain extent offset some of the serious harm that was done to the fishing industry as a result of the government re-organization bill of 1971 whereby the Department of Fisheries, as it was then known, ceased to exist. It was merged into a new Department of the Environment. I say serious damage because the Department of Fisheries was dis-established at a time when the industry in Canada was beginning to face very serious problems, the most serious in the history of this ancient industry. I say they would offset the damage that move caused to a certain extent, because the purpose of the bill is to create a deputy minister of fisheries. There is no such person in the organization of the Government of Canada at the present time.

I might say that as a result of my amendment to the Government Organization Act of 1971, there is now a Minister of Fisheries. According to the law, the Minister of

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

the Environment (Mrs. Sauvé) is also the Minister of Fisheries. Of course we now also have a Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc). This gives me an opportunity to digress for a moment to congratulate the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) who has just been elevated to the post of parliamentary secretary.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: This debate will give him an opportunity to make his debut as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Fisheries, and the Minister of State (Fisheries). He indeed has three ministries to which he is assigned.

I also wanted to make some very complimentary comments about the Minister of State (Fisheries) who was in the House until a short time ago. However, since he elected not to dignify this debate with his presence, I will withhold the comments I intended to make about the minister and his role in the recent ICNAF conference in Montreal.

Also may I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to my colleague, the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), who has been elected by our caucus to be our official spokesman on fisheries.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McGrath: I offer my congratulations as well to his predecessor, the former member for St. John's West, who is now the minister of fisheries in the government of Newfoundland.

This is a very important bill because it would create within the Department of the Environment a deputy minister of fisheries. In other words, the public servant within the Department of the Environment who now presides over that division known as Fisheries Service would be elevated to the rank of deputy minister. That would have certain obvious advantages, not the least of which would be to re-emphasize, underline, and restate the importance of fisheries in the over-all budgetary considerations of the Department of the Environment.

It is fair to say that the major weakness of the present setup that we now have for the organization of the government whereby we have a Minister of State (Fisheries) is that the minister is virtually powerless because he does not preside over or control the budget of the Department of the Environment. The Minister of State (Fisheries) is dedicated to his job. However, let him explain to the House and the country why among the first items to be eliminated from the budget of the Government of Canada as a result of the budget brought down last June was the vote of \$10 million for small craft harbours. That \$10 million was about a third of what we had for the current fiscal year to spend on wharves, breakwaters, and facilities for our fishermen. That was eliminated much to the surprise, chagrin, and consternation of all members, certainly those who represent constituencies in the Atlantic provinces, British Columbia and indeed the fresh water fishing areas of this country.

The appointment of a Minister of State (Fisheries) and the elimination of the small craft budget for fisheries is contrary to the expressed wish of the Liberal Party of Canada. A resolution was passed by the 1973 Liberal