

*Government Organization Act*

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

**Mr. Peters:** We need a minister who will allow Canadians to reap the benefits of the sea. We have the fish. Our fishermen are willing to work hard to ensure a good supply of fish, and it is up to the nation to enforce terms arrived at through negotiation, terms which say how much fish other countries can take. From what fishermen tell me, we did not do too well in those negotiations because we did not have a minister solely responsible for the fishery taking part in the negotiations. We need a minister who is totally familiar with the subject and whose responsibilities are not divided between two departments, both of which are important. We are in favour of such a development. Possibly the new minister could be the hon. member opposite who comes from a coastal area. I wanted to make sure I had the right area. I would think that no matter where you live on Vancouver Island, you would be close to the sea. I know that Port Alberni is close to the sea and in order to be elected there you must know something about the subject. I hope that is the kind of minister who will be appointed to head this department. I honestly believe we have not paid enough attention to our fisheries.

● (1720)

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

**Mr. Peters:** There is no question about it. If we had, we would not now be in such a stupid position with regard to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. If the French enforce their 200-mile limit, they will take away from us the whole Gulf of St. Lawrence. In fact, they seem to be in a better position to enforce it with gunboats, and so on, than we do. We should have taken over those islands during the last war when they were available, instead of playing "footsie" with the Japanese and other people. Most citizens of those islands would have appreciated someone liberating them. It could have been done previously in a much more peaceful way.

This raises a problem. If we had a 200-mile limit and someone else had a 200-mile limit, who would get the Gulf of St. Lawrence—the biggest, or the closest? I think it would be the biggest. The French fleet is probably still bigger than ours. These are major problems in the St. Lawrence where there are very large shrimp beds. If not properly handled, they could be fished out very quickly. If international fleets are allowed to enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence to harvest these shrimp, we will be buying from somebody else, as we now do, from the more aggressive fishing nations.

The members in this party may not represent coastal areas, but we are very interested in seeing a ministry of fisheries being established. There are other ministries with a lot less scope for development. They have certainly proven to be very limited in their ability. The minister in charge of penitentiaries seems to be going backward, instead of forward, as do many other ministers.

We must provide the right kind of husbandry if our fisheries resource is to be available to Canadians in the future. The 200-mile limit will be a totally empty gesture if we are not able

[Mr. Peters.]

to enforce it. The billion dollars we spend on aircraft which will fly at 50,000 feet at 500 miles an hour certainly will not be able to enforce it.

Unless hon. members believe the government cannot afford a ministry of fisheries, unless the members of the government party believe the government cannot afford a minister of fisheries, or unless they believe there is no one on the government side capable of being a minister of fisheries, I am sure that members opposite will support this resolution.

**Mr. Jim Fleming (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to be as brief as possible and yet, hopefully, cover some of the concerns expressed by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath). I know that many members on both sides of the chamber share his view on this matter. I also want to give my colleagues from Comox-Alberni (Mr. Anderson) and the hon. member for Restigouche (Mr. Harquail) a chance because they are very anxious to express themselves on this bill.

In beginning, I must say, with all equanimity and tolerance, I have not heard as much clap-crap in my life as the comments a few moments ago by the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) on the question of the enforcement of the 200-mile limit and the issue of St. Pierre and Miquelon. I wish I had seen the hon. member at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry when these matters were discussed or at the special briefing that was held so that members could have a better view of these matters.

I agree that the government has a tremendous challenge ahead of it, particularly the Department of Fisheries and the Environment with regard to surveillance. However, a very responsible and adequate program has been set up. It should be given a fair chance. The many Canadians who work in those services and feel the challenge of their responsibility should not be given that kind of attitude in the beginning when they obviously feel they can fulfil this new obligation which will arrive January 1.

I wish to move for a few minutes to reasons which I think show a very real connection, a very real common line between fisheries matters and environmental matters and one which I think justifies to a considerable degree, if restraints and circumstances make it necessary, those two very vital areas of authority of the federal government coming under the umbrella of one department: the condition of water, the condition of our oceans which flank Canada, the conditions of our inland freshwater waterways, our lakes and our streams determine, in fact, the entire life-cycle of our fisheries in terms of survival of that natural wildlife which has been with us since time immemorial and its survival in the future.

The conditions of those waterways is not only the survival of that wildlife, but in fact the finding of jobs, the supplying of essential food sources to all Canadians and other people around the world. Therefore, nothing could be more directly linked than environmental concerns, the health of our waterways and the survival of the fisheries.