

Supply

Mr. Minister, you have been charged with a responsibility for a very important resource in British Columbia—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. While it is perfectly reasonable for the Minister to listen to what the Hon. Member has to say, the Hon. Member must address the Chair.

Mr. Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously I got carried away in my eagerness to relate to the Minister the fact that we have some solutions which would be acceptable to the fishing industry in British Columbia, from the point of view of maintaining employment opportunities, of protecting habitat and increasing the amount of salmon available.

If the Minister is serious about obtaining the co-operation of the Opposition Parties, he should look seriously at tabling documents in the House of Commons so that we can deal in some detail with his recommendations and those of the Ministerial Advisory Committee, the Sports Fishery Advisory Committee and others, in committee, not only in Ottawa but with the possibility of dealing with some of these very serious problems in the Province of British Columbia.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Questions or comments? Debate.

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, it had been my intention to take the high road right from the beginning of my comments, but there were two developments today which I find I just cannot pass by without comment. The first occurred just before lunch when the NDP tried to eliminate this debate today by seeking unanimous consent for another motion which was defeated yesterday.

An Hon. Member: On disarmament.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): My other comment relates to the abuse the Minister made of his time. He was given extra time at the end of his 20 minutes. He may not realize it but the first nine minutes of his speech—and I timed him—were taken up with castigating the Opposition, particularly my Party. I think that is disgraceful. It is an abusive use of the Minister's time, and I am sorry he did it.

I would like to turn to the matters at issue because we were all disturbed over the weekend to learn that we are facing this debate in front of a rather ominous background.

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not mind the Hon. Member criticizing me for having objected to the secrecy in bringing this matter to debate. However, does he think it is proper that the official spokesman for the NDP learned by accident only this morning that this was the topic for debate? Does he think that by hiding the agenda so that he learned of it only this morning by chance—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. The Hon. Minister should know that that is hardly a point of order.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): That was not a point of order.

Mr. Tobin: But a point well made.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): The procedure was followed last evening. The motion was put down by five o'clock; I am sure of that.

Last weekend we learned to our dismay that the Minister had broken off talks with the United States on the Pacific salmon fisheries. For those who know anything about our West Coast fisheries, this is bad news. The talks were aimed at apportioning the catch in such a way that it can be managed to the advantage of both countries. The Canadian side blames the Americans; the Americans, no doubt, blame the Canadians for wanting to grab too much. It is on both sides; I suppose that is normal. I am not being critical. I am just suggesting that this debate is being held in those critical circumstances and that it is unfortunate.

The consequences of this breakdown are serious. I hope to come back to it in a moment, but meanwhile I want to put some facts on the record to indicate the magnitude of the problem because, as my friend and colleague, the Hon. Member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser), stated in his remarks, "It is impossible to manage a fishery without everyone involved understanding just what the facts are". That is a direct quotation from his comments earlier in this debate.

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission publishes figures of the salmon catch regularly. For 1979—and I am talking of salmon only—Canada caught just over 23.5 million fish; Japan caught something a little over 60 million; and the United States, which of course has the Gulf of Alaska area in which to catch a great many of its fish, caught about 99.5 million fish. Yet, according to news reports of the break in the negotiations between Canada and the United States, it was Canada which was expected to cut back on the catch. Those are facts. They illustrate and underline the extent of the problem with which we are confronted.

Pacific salmon are strange creatures. They are born in fresh water. They go out to sea and live inshore for the early part of their lives as smolts. Then they venture further and further out into the Pacific in a wide migration and return at their allotted time—and the allotted time is not the same for all species—to their natal stream, sometimes as far as 700 miles or more inland, to lay their eggs and die. They are quite different from Atlantic salmon. In the course of that migration, lasting anywhere from two years to five years, again depending upon the species, they go out as far as the International Date Line, 180 degrees, and as far north as deep inside the Gulf of Alaska. There are records of a tagged steelhead, for example, having been released west of the Date Line, on the Japanese-