

*Small Businesses Loans Act*

We are left with a lot of frustration, not only with the Minister and with Bill C-63, but with the way in which the Department is falling behind. It is one Department that should be front and centre. With a little bit of support from this Government, the fisheries industry could generate thousands of new jobs.

Every time the Americans threaten us with another tariff, this Government, being as weak-kneed as it is, simply removes another program—and in this case, it is a program that has been beneficial to fishermen.

To repeat, the two main issues in respect of this Bill are, first of all, that it reduces the ceiling for loans to fishermen from \$150,000 to \$100,000, and second, that the term of the loan is reduced from 15 years to 10 years.

It is our hope that the Minister will be able to accept the two amendments proposed, thus taking us back to the situation under FILA.

The proposed legislation carries with it yet another burden for fisheries, that being a new registration fee, a fee that is set at 1 per cent of the fishermen's guaranteed loan. Fishermen will have to pay this fee up front. For a fisherman facing emergency repairs, the fee would take scarce money out of his pocket.

Apparently, the revenues derived from this fee will go toward administrative costs. That is what the Government tells us. But fishermen, like other citizens, already pay taxes to the Government.

There is an interesting wrinkle to this. With the 1 per cent fee, the \$18.8 million in loans under FILA in 1985-86 would have resulted in revenues of \$188,000. The Nielsen task force found that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans spent only \$97,000 on administering the FILA program. Therefore, the new user fee will pay for the old program, twice over.

Once again, we have a situation that is blatantly unfair to our taxpaying fishermen.

This Government, with its sweeping majority, is going in the direction of user fees. It wants cost recovery on everything.

It is not right that this type of fee should be charged to our fishermen.

The Minister, in his remarks, said he was pleased to bring fishermen into the Small Businesses Loans Act, and he went on to praise the Act on the basis that it does have a larger cap over-all. But it is a step backwards for fishermen. I want that to be clear on the record.

It is my hope that the Minister will be able to accept the amendments, which I shall have delivered to him. I told his Parliamentary Secretary last evening that I would have these amendments here this morning. Once the Bill is referred to Committee of the Whole, it is my hope that those amendments can be dealt with, and adopted.

The other problem I have with this Bill is the timing, with the Bill having been brought in on the last sitting day before we break for the summer. This Bill should have gone to the appropriate legislative committee for detailed study. But we in the Opposition are caught. We know that there are people out there who are depending upon loans. We know that. We know that they need this legislation before the summer.

• (1310)

I guess half a loaf of bread is better than no bread. The Government knew that FILA was to terminate on June 30, and it brought in Bill C-63 for second and third reading at this late hour. We hope the amendments will be accepted and that we can go along with part of it. However, I give the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, wherever he is, fair warning not to try to do it again on the last day before a summer recess.

We have no alternative today. If it is not approved, Canadian fishermen will have to wait until the House reconvened in the fall to obtain loans.

It is not a good piece of legislation and we oppose it. However, we know that time is of the essence. The Government is not playing a fair game with our fishermen by bringing legislation, which requires improvement, into the House on the day before we recess. Certainly fishermen will remember and understand the dilemma faced by all of us on the opposition benches.

**Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands):** Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to make a few remarks on Bill C-63, an Act to amend the Small Businesses Loans Act.

I am sure Canadian fishermen are already very aware of where they stand with the Government. They are aware that it pays very little attention to their needs, cuts back on their programs, and squeezes them for every possible nickel.

They have seen the underfunding of different fisheries programs. Small craft harbours had to beg for funds. They finally received a \$100 million allocation, which I am sure the Minister will use where it will do the most good for the Conservative Party but perhaps not the most good for fishermen and their communities. They have seen increases in licence fees and in wharfage fees. They have also seen an underfunded Salmonid Enhancement Program.

Now, on the final day of June when the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act expires, the Government brings in a piece of legislation which it wants passed immediately, otherwise the entire loans program for fishermen disappears.

The Fisheries Improvement Loans Act was first brought in in 1955. Over the last 32 years, some 18,198 loans have been made under the program, to a total of over \$246 million. There has been a number of claims where fishermen have been unable to make their payments, some 611 claims totalling \$13