

department the prestige that it deserves in the Canadian nation as well as the prestige it deserves internationally. When we meet the various countries of the world in 1971 and in years to come we must speak as a nation that exemplifies and demonstrates great concern for the fishing industry of this country.

If the government cannot accept the amendment and demonstrate to the Canadian people in the Atlantic region, in Quebec and in British Columbia that it is concerned about the fisheries, then my recommendation to the Prime Minister, this right honourable, eminent, omnipotent gentleman, is that we renege our commitment to send candidates to these areas in the next election on the ground that we are not interested in the economy or the future of their people because we want to eliminate the fishery as an industry.

I notice that the Chair is getting a little anxious to get the amendment through, so perhaps the minister would get the floor and give the committee an indication that the government will accept the amendment. We could soothe present feelings in the House of Commons and short-circuit a good deal of debate if the Minister of Fisheries, who could not attend a great economic conference in Newfoundland a few days ago because of his commitment to this bill, were willing to indicate the government's acceptance of the amendment moved by the hon. member for St. John's East, which provides that the new department be called the department of fisheries and the environment. If he were willing to accept the amendment we would be quite agreeable to allowing the vote to take place and—

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Richard): Order. The hon. member's time expired some time ago.

Mr. Lundrigan: Perhaps the minister would like to indicate his position on this amendment.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Chairman, I feel impelled as a former Minister of Fisheries to say a few words about this amendment. I do so because I feel that the Department of Fisheries is not only an historic one but has been a very important department of government. There was a period when it included what are now some of the responsibilities of the Department of Transport. This was in the days when it was known as the Department of the Marine and Fisheries. It then became the Department of Fisheries and was responsible for the fisheries and nothing else. Subsequently it became the Department of Fisheries and Forestry. This old, historic department is now to disappear as a name from the departments of government.

I think this is unfortunate, not only because the commercial fishery is very important economically for Canada but also because the Canadian Department of Fisheries has rightly acquired a world wide reputation for capability, competence and efficiency. Furthermore, in a day when such matters as pollution and environmental control had little public interest, the Department of Fisheries as such, I think more than any other department of government, pioneered in the field of pollution control. The Department of Fisheries did much in the way of

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preventing pollution of our fish streams and the dumping of pollutants like mill waste, mine tailings and chemicals of various kinds into our water courses and lakes. The Department of Fisheries has a longer and more praiseworthy record of pollution control and environmental improvement than any other department of government.

Therefore, I think the government should reconsider its decision to call the proposed department simply the department of the environment and should agree to this very reasonable amendment which would set up a new department to be known as the department of fisheries and the environment. Or if the government has some other suggestion to make to the committee, I think we might be able to agree to it and in this way get on with the business of the House, having preserved an historic and important department. If that were so, then when ministers attend international conferences and deal with their opposite numbers from other countries they would be known as ministers of fisheries and the environment. It is true that very few countries have a department of fisheries as such. Many countries have departments of fisheries and agriculture, or fisheries and something else; but I suggest this is an important consideration that the government should not forget.

This is a field in which there is no hard and fast rule about what should come within the department and what it should be named. One could juggle the functions of departments endlessly and advance logical reasons for doing so in light of the current situation. We have had a lot of experience of this sort of thing during the last few years. Certain functions have been taken from one department and put into another from time to time. We have established such bodies as Information Canada and Statistics Canada. It seems to me that one of the reasons for these creations is the elimination of old, historic names such as the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, functions of government that have had the same name since confederation. I think it is unfortunate that we are losing some of this heritage. Sometimes I think this government is intent on innovation for the sake of innovation, change for the sake of change. If we wanted to do this I could make many suggestions. We could take the Department of Finance, part of the Department of Manpower and Immigration and part of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, put them under one minister and call it "unemployment Canada". We could do that if we wanted to be that ridiculous. I am serious about the suggestion.

● (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That's no joke.

Mr. MacLean: It certainly is not. I am serious about this scrapping of the old, historical functions and names of departments which are well known not only to Canadians but throughout the world. I think we are losing something which we cannot replace through the creation of this new department with an entirely new name. I seriously recommend that the government reconsider its decision and include the word "fisheries" in the name of this new department.