

Fisheries Act

I notice, Mr. Speaker, that you are indicating that I have run out of time. In conclusion, the authority being sought by the Minister in this Bill is suspect to fishermen in Canada. That is the first point. I do not see anything wrong with the Minister getting that authority. Obviously he has to have some authority. The new authority which he will get under the Bill, according to some Members in this House, is not a good thing. I cannot see that much wrong with it. I simply point out that in legislation such as this, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans should remember that the fishermen of Canada have some very legitimate points to make. Those points should be taken into consideration when dealing with new legislation in this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remove any suggestion that we were not asking for fairness in the question of moorage rates in British Columbia. If the previous Government and other Governments which preceded it did exempt people in the fishing industry in eastern Canada from moorage rates, those exemptions should apply on the West Coast of Canada the same as they do in Atlantic Canada. No person in this House would disagree with that statement. After the incredible statements that came to light in the committee last night, I am sure that justice will be done and that that in fact will happen on the West Coast. I am convinced if this does not happen quickly, there is going to be a very rough fight over this issue.

I think the Hon. Member will be with us fighting that cause, the whole principle of fairness which I talked about with regard to those moorage fees being lifted on the West Coast of Canada. In many respects that infrastructure is like that of the highways. Commercial activity has to be viewed in that manner. I just want to pick up that one small point. I enjoyed the Hon. Member's speech very much. I expect he and his colleagues will be fighting with us to have that principle of fairness observed.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of fairness. The question is one of abolition. It should not be in place. Wharfage fees should not be charged in this country. I agree with the Hon. Member that a fisherman with a 38-foot boat will now have to pay to tie up. If it is a rickety old wharf or a brand new wharf in the Province of British Columbia, he will have to pay \$120 a month. It is not fair that he has to pay that money. That is what I dispute. It is true, as the Hon. Member says, that all fishermen should have to pay the same, regardless of what province they are in, if it is a federal Act. My point is that it should not be charged at all. There should be no fee.

I wish to say something for the benefit of the Hon. Member from New Brunswick who is about to speak in the Chamber. I always refer to this Hon. Member as being the Hon. Member from New Brunswick because of the speeches he has made over the years in this Chamber. He is going to take exception to something that I said and I will not have a chance to reply until the end.

• (1220)

Last night, some fishermen appeared before the Fisheries Committee. I wish the Member from New Brunswick had been there to listen to those fishermen. They explained why we must keep the Fishing Vessel Insurance Plan. They said that there are groups of fishermen who go to private insurance companies but that there are other groups of fishermen who cannot afford to go to those insurance companies because they cannot get comparable rates. The Fishing Vessel Insurance Plan of the federal Government is much better than the private insurance plan because of the turn-over time involved in settling accounts and because the fees are much cheaper.

The Member from New Brunswick will say that there is this group of fishermen and that group of fishermen who go to private insurance companies and have no problems at all and if they can do it, then why can the rest of the fishermen not do so as well. I only wish he had been at the committee meeting last night. He could have had a good argument with the fishermen from British Columbia who were present.

Mr. Gass: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member from Newfoundland has referred to the Hon. Member from New Brunswick. The Hon. Member from New Brunswick wanted to speak but unfortunately, because of an agreement that we made to adjourn this debate and move the subject matter of the Bill to committee, I think the time has come when there will be no more speakers on this Bill.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make the comment that that is unfortunate. The Hon. Member to whom I was referring, the Hon. Member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain), is probably one of the most knowledgeable Conservative Members in this Chamber regarding fishery and forestry matters. He is the most knowledgeable Member I have seen on that side of the House in the past 10 years. I would suggest to members of the Conservative Party that when they are arranging debates on forestry and fishery, they make sure that that Hon. Member speaks.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, there has been an agreement made today to adjourn this debate and to put the subject matter of the Bill before committee. The Minister has guaranteed us in the House that he will meet with us regarding the Bill itself. We in the Official Opposition agree with that and would like to show the necessary co-operation.

We realize that the Bill gives to the Minister powers that he thought he already had until the ruling of Mr. Justice Collier of British Columbia. However, there are a great many unanswered questions that can be asked of the Department of Fisheries. That is why we wanted the Minister to meet with us before this Bill went through second reading in the House. The Minister has agreed to do that, and we in the Official Opposition agree that we should now adjourn this debate, move the subject matter into committee for further discussion, and then return it to the floor of the House of Commons to complete second reading.