

We on this side of the House support a Canada in which everyone is treated equally in the Constitution and the law regardless of race, language, creed or culture.

● (1250)

The aboriginal fishing strategy imposed on the fisheries on both coasts by the past government is an example of the exact opposite. The creation of a separate commercial aboriginal fishery was not demanded in the Sparrow decision of the Supreme Court as some would have us believe.

Furthermore, last June the British Columbia Court of Appeal found that an aboriginal right to a commercial fishery did not exist. One would then have to ask why this unfair and discriminatory policy was foisted on the commercial fishing industry in 1992 only five months after the then fisheries minister, Mr. Crosbie, stated that he would never commercialize the native food fishery on the Fraser River.

Was it because of the constitutional negotiations that were going on at that time? Was the fishery simply a carrot to encourage native leaders to drop their demands to be considered a distinct society? Was the AFS put in place simply to encourage native support for what was to become the Charlottetown accord? One can only wonder.

This separate native commercial fishery was set up despite the fact that aboriginal people make up only 3 per cent to 4 per cent of British Columbia's population. Yet, they hold 20 per cent to 25 per cent of all commercial fishing licences in British Columbia and their share of the commercial catch is estimated to be 25 per cent to 30 per cent.

Continuation of this ill considered policy will only serve to drive Canadians apart. It will not and cannot achieve any of its stated goals.

In 1969, the Trudeau government white paper echoed the principle in the famous Brown versus Kansas City Board of Education decision that ended official discrimination against blacks in the United States school system.

It said: "you cannot have separate but equal. To be separate is to be inherently unequal".

I urge the Prime Minister to use the insight and wisdom he displayed then, as minister of Indian affairs and the minister responsible for this white paper, to put an end to the aboriginal fishing strategy.

On another point, we fully support all efforts by the government to put the thousands of east coast fishermen back to work. We know the seriousness of the problem and would urge the government to listen to those people who are affected, those people who fish and understand the problem. These people have valuable knowledge and experience that would benefit the minister in any future decisions he may make.

Routine Proceedings

Finally, we understand that being minister of fisheries today is not an easy job. Indeed, some people would suggest that it is punishment for something one has done wrong. However, having spent some time with the new minister, I am sure he has done nothing wrong and appears to have the best interests of fishermen and Canadians in his heart.

We will not always agree with the government or the minister of fisheries, and at those times we will let them know loud and clear. In those instances where we do agree, no matter how controversial the stand, we will be there firmly beside him.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, following consultations with the opposition parties, I think that there would be agreement to revert to Statements by Ministers, so that the Minister of Transport could make a short important statement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Would there be unanimous agreement to revert to Statements by Ministers?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

AIR CANADA

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues on all sides of the House for the unanimous consent granted in order that I may make this announcement.

I am announcing that, as Minister of Transport, I intend to designate Air Canada as the second carrier to Japan following completion of negotiations with the Japanese government. Under the current Air Services Agreement between Canada and Japan, Canada has the authority to designate more than one carrier to serve that country. We have advised the Japanese government that we want to resume air negotiations as soon as possible.

● (1255)

[*Translation*]

On September 1, 1994, a new airport is to open in Osaka, Japan's largest air transport market after Tokyo, of course. With a population of over 20 million, the Osaka region offers important opportunities for Canadian carriers in the Asian market.

A number of desirable landing and takeoff slots at Kansai Airport have been provisionally reserved for Canada. The federal government must now move quickly to finalize the details of an agreement to use these valuable slots.