

*Supply—Fisheries and Forestry*

operate successfully the most fundamental business of buying and selling fish.

Some 25 years ago the fishing industry was a comparatively prosperous one in Newfoundland, an industry second only to the pulp and paper industry. With each passing year since then, instead of keeping pace with competition and modern methods, instead of giving management leadership to keep pace with competition, instead of on-the-spot training to ensure quality control, instead of creating markets, government has turned its back on the fishermen of the Atlantic region and has allowed the industry to reach its present depressed proportions.

In 1963 the then Liberal prime minister promised in an election speech that a new Liberal government would co-operate with Newfoundland, where fishing is such an important industry. Mr. Pearson said:

We shall work out a program for fishery development based on the principle that the government of Canada should parallel action already taken for agriculture with action to develop the fisheries.

That was written five years ago, Mr. Chairman.

● (5:30 p.m.)

What a fishy story that turned out to be! If we were to ask the fishermen what action has been taken by the two Liberal governments, provincial and federal, to assist them, I suggest the answer would be, "None". The most amazing thing to me, and something I cannot understand, is how one can get the attention of the government in respect of an emergency that is real. Since the opening of the house we have been endeavouring to point out the seriousness of the typical position of the fishing industry in our province, and the needs for assistance. The Newfoundland members met with the Minister of Fisheries two months ago. They have been in touch with him or his staff almost daily since then. I should like to say here that the Minister of Fisheries and the members of his staff have been most co-operative in providing me with honest and sincere answers, although no solutions. I am sure the minister realizes the seriousness of the situation. I can only assume that not only did he take over a mess created by his predecessors, but that he is being thwarted in his efforts by his superior, whoever he might be—and I use the singular intentionally.

We have a very serious problem on our hands, which will become a national emergency, indeed if it is not one already. This emergency has been delayed only by a

strange turn of events in the world situation. I wonder whether we realize this and whether the government realizes it has avoided the collapse of an industry affecting some 100,000 people, either directly or indirectly, only because of some ten million pounds of dried cod being provided to the starving people in a certain country? I might ask whether this should be the criteria for the future of the fishing industry? What will happen next year? I might also ask what will happen while the government is still looking for a long range plan? What about the next three months; what about right now? Why do we preach restraint in spending on the one hand and the waste of millions on the other? How can the government justify saving \$350 thousand on salt subsidies and yet be prepared to spend that much on a by-election, due to the whims and fancies of one individual? How can the government justify the cutting off of deficiency payments to the fishing industry and waste millions of dollars on arts, cultural centres and fancy furniture?

Then, Mr. Chairman, what about foreign aid? Let us give foreign aid to needy countries, but let us not be blind to our own needs.

The district which I represent stretches along a coastline of some 300 miles. It consists of some 100 communities whose main occupation is fishing. The citizens of these communities are a sturdy, honest and industrious people. They are a reliable and conscientious group of Canadians. They have a native intelligence about the fishing industry that the supposed experts in the field of economics would do well to study. These people do not want handouts. They do not want disguised welfare—lard on the government, as it has been described. All they want is sensible direction from the government. But they have lost faith in the government, due to the ever changing policies. They are sick and tired of the here-today-gone-tomorrow assistance programs. They would like a chance to compete against the foreign draggers which are allowed to rape their very livelihood, because the government will not enforce fishing limits. They want only realistic direction by the government in creating a market, and being told what the market needs. They also want to have a fair price commensurate with the cost of equipment.

In a previous speech in the house I invited the various ministers to visit my district, instead of junketing to other countries. That invitation still stands. Perhaps I might invite the Prime Minister to visit the rural fishing