

*Supply*

facilities, Apparently this has not happened, either, because of conflict within the cabinet, difficulty with regard to jurisdiction or difficulties in structuring.

• (2100)

The fact is that today on our coast—and I think hon. members from the Pacific coast are of the same opinion—you cannot get anything from the Department of Public Works. All of our facilities, thousands of wharves and breakwaters and other fishing facilities that are absolutely essential for the continuation of the industry, are going downhill and are not being replaced. If you write to the Department of the Environment or the Department of Public Works they will tell you that there has been no increase in the fishing activity and therefore the expense cannot be justified. Every move is being made to destroy the fishing industry of this nation, and that is our major concern. I ask the minister to clear up once and for all this nonsense regarding who is responsible for fishing facilities.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lundrigan:** I will pass over several things having to do with marketing and the flow of dollars into the pockets of our fishermen and go on to another issue which is major in consequence. It has to do with unemployment insurance for fishermen. About two years ago we started raising questions about some plan that the minister might have for the fishermen of our country so that they could be treated in the same way as workers in other industries in terms of unemployment insurance benefits. The Minister of the Environment stated at that time that his department was studying the problem.

Three or four weeks ago I met Mr. Guy Cousineau, chairman of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, and raised the question with him. He told me that the commission had studied the problem extensively. I make no negative comment about Mr. Cousineau's involvement, which is a very recent and a very honourable one but the fact is that the department has not yet come to grips with the problem.

I should like to tell hon. members a fact which I am sure some of them do not know. If a labourer or construction worker has eight weeks' stamps, he can qualify for up to 44 weeks benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Some hon. members may ask why fishermen are involved at all. I wonder whether they know what fishermen can get with eight weeks' stamps. Does anybody in the House know what a fisherman can get with eight weeks' stamps? There is a special ruling for fishermen. They get in benefits two-thirds of the number of weeks they have worked. For example, if a fisherman pays for nine weeks' stamps—I will try to make it easier for those hon. members who are not as mathematically inclined as the minister—he can get only six weeks' benefits. He cannot start receiving benefits until December 1, and this ends in May.

There are all kinds of restrictions; it does not make any difference how long a fisherman works, how industrious he is. In the fall, the fisherman who goes out to fish in the North Atlantic—the same thing would apply in the Pacific—begins to find his unemployment insurance benefits

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

limited. In the fall, the weather on the North Atlantic deteriorates, the big storms start, storms that have a wind velocity of 80 or 100 miles an hour sometimes. This gets a little rough, and fishermen can only work a few days a week. We talk about rough times in the House of Commons. Let me say that this is a pleasure trip in comparison. Nobody here understands how rough it gets out there. These fellows can go out to fish in the Atlantic only on certain days.

What do you think the UIC does? When fishing stops in the fall, they take the fishermen's last 20 weeks of work and they average out what benefits they have had. Consequently, the fellow who gets in his boat and goes out into the North Atlantic in the fall, in November or December, is running the risk of losing his life but is penalized for that. The reason is that he is too industrious. However, the fellow who decided that it is a little too cold out yonder and gives up fishing in August is all right because he has had the beautiful, heavy summer, fishing stamps at a time when there is a glut of fish around the shores.

This is the kind of benefit that the minister is ready to provide for our fishermen. Does he not feel guilty about these kinds of injustices? If I were sitting there as Minister of the Environment and either had not enough interest or enough pull in the cabinet to rectify these matters, I would feel embarrassed and really ashamed.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lundrigan:** Any fisherman in Newfoundland who really understands what fishing is all about would feel the same as I do. My colleagues from Nova Scotia are certainly well able to speak for themselves, but I know they have the same attitude. The same is true in the province of Ontario in which fresh fish marketing is all messed up. Manitoba also got itself into a mess because of fresh fish marketing. Yet this minister does not want to talk about it because the sexy thing right now is the environment. When you talk about the environment you can cloud the fishing industry issue. If we had a minister of fisheries today, he would be roasted alive in the House of Commons.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lundrigan:** That is not happening to this minister because the environment issue is so popular and so much on the minds of people nowadays that we hardly have time to talk about fish. I understand what the hon. member from the Vancouver area is talking about every day and what his colleague from Vancouver means. These are vital issues, and consequently fishing has become irrelevant. It is a ruptured appendix which should be cut out, so far as the minister is concerned.

Mr. Chairman, there are two or three other issues to which I should like to refer. One is the sort of thing with which the hon. member for Hull across the way should be able to identify. I am referring to the hon. doctor who sits here daily, the distinguished member. Even my colleagues from parts of Canada that have never seen the rolling waves of the Atlantic ocean should be able to understand this. In 1947—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!