

*Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation*

but because it is a sister corporation to the Canadian Saltfish Corporation. I believe the corporation is working very well and that it is doing an excellent job in serving the needs of the saltfish sector and the fishermen who salt and cure their fish in Newfoundland and Quebec. I still feel, however, that all is not well with this corporation. I believe the problem has to be addressed sooner or later. I say to my successor that the problem will not go away nor can he force it to go away by somehow sweeping it under the table and pretending the problem does not exist.

I find that it would be improper for me to go into any of the details of the discussions I had when I was minister, but that is for my successor to decide; that is his responsibility. I hope that the minister will accept my advice when I say to him that, in my view, there is nothing in the correspondence or in the documents which could not stand the light of public scrutiny. If these documents and letters were released, it would help members of the House who have a special interest in this corporation in trying to arrive at a determination as to exactly what future the corporation should have.

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is an important corporation for many people in northern Manitoba, as well as northern Ontario, parts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and the territories. A previous speaker mentioned that approximately 1.5 million square miles of Canada are covered by this act. Of those 1.5 million square miles, 176,000 square miles are in the Churchill constituency. People involved in the fishing industry in my riding are very supportive of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Last fall there was an attempt by the Conservative government of Manitoba to privatize that corporation and to set up the old system of fish buyers coming in and running the fishing industry in northern Manitoba.

Throughout northern Manitoba fishermen living in small communities expressed their concern to the Conservative government of Manitoba. They told the government why they did not want the privatization of FFMC. Later on, the Conservative government in Manitoba tried to privatize not the buying and selling end, but the actual fishing end of the industry in northern Manitoba.

At the present time many fishing licences in northern Manitoba are operated on a community basis. For example, four fishermen from the native community of Cross Lake get a licence. Licences are normally given to the same four fishermen year after year. These licences are passed on to sons and daughters or to others in the same community—they may not be related at all—who will learn the fishing industry. What the Conservative government of Manitoba tried to do was to give individual licences to fishermen in Cross Lake telling them the licences were theirs, and they did not belong to the other 4,000 people who live in Cross Lake. The government told them they could sell their individual licences to one of their group, to someone who has never fished, or they could sell their licences outside of their native area, perhaps to someone from Winnipeg, Toronto or Montreal.

These fishermen, the majority of whom were native, had a series of public meetings throughout the north in which they expressed their concern about attempts to privatize fishing in northern Manitoba. That situation happened during the federal election. Those of us who were concerned about fishing attended those meetings. The provincial minister in charge of natural resources eventually had to withdraw his package.

The previous speaker mentioned he had received certain representations last fall from those who would like to privatize the industry. I would suggest the hon. member was getting those representations from the Manitoba government. There were others concerned about the direction in which FFMC was going, but those who wanted to privatize the corporation were basically people representing the government of Manitoba. I would say now that that same Conservative government in Manitoba, having spoken to the fishermen, would not dare to try to dismantle the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation at this time.

People in that industry, without any lobbyists one way or the other, have made up their minds. They knew how things went in the early 1960s prior to the introduction of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and they know what is happening now. They know which system is better. These people know they are better served by a marketing commission which will make sure that American buyers do not come in and run the industry. They know they are better served by people in the community who actually fish and whom they can elect to the board of directors for the FFMC. They know they are better served when they can get some initial prices early in the season, and if there is a profit at the end of the year that the money will come back to the fishermen.

Many of our fishermen were becoming serfs on our lakes under the system in 1964-1965-1966. The fishermen would be working for a fishing company. They would buy their goods from that fishing company and the company would give them whatever price it felt like. People were not receiving 50 per cent of the total price. They were receiving 40 per cent of the total price, if they were lucky. They were paying higher prices for the goods they were buying from these fishing companies which had a near monopoly in northern Manitoba. The hon. member who introduced this motion called the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation communistic. By doing that he will make a lot of the fishermen in northern Manitoba think that communism is a great thing because they happen to like the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

People know there are some problems with the corporation. They would like to see a more aggressive selling policy and more work done in the local communities. Certainly there is always room for improvement and I would not disagree with the presentation of these papers but let us not be fooled by what the mover of this motion said.

The people who are really involved in fishing want that corporation to be strong. They want that corporation to sell their fish and to provide initial funding for them. They do not want members from B.C., who do not understand the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, to pretend to be experts. They