

Supply—Fisheries

whom he will be meeting at that time. I say this especially in view of the fact that the European common market is contemplating setting up a base in the French possession of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and the Japanese are considering establishing a base in Newfoundland. If and when these countries follow through with their plans, the present over-fishing will be further intensified, and I cannot stress too strongly the necessity for further international consultation on our deep sea fisheries conservation problem.

Mr. Carier: Mr. Chairman, as 75 per cent, or more, of my constituents are fishermen I should like to make a few remarks on the estimates of this department. But before I continue I should like to extend my compliments to the Minister of Fisheries on the first presentation of his estimates in this house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Churchill: Do you want them to pass tonight?

Mr. Monteith: No, they don't.

Mr. Carier: I should also like to pay my tribute to the former deputy minister, Mr. George Clark, who was a great personal friend of all of us, certainly of all of us from my province. With his death Canada suffered a great loss, as did also the fishing industry of Canada. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, I should like to extend my good wishes to his successor.

Fishing is the oldest primary industry in Canada and is one of the most important of our primary industries. Yet I think it can be said without contradiction that it is the most neglected of all our primary industries. Canada is fortunate in having a great, natural, self-perpetuating resource right on our doorstep. But we are 20 years behind the times in exploiting it. Other speakers have already pointed out that others come from countries thousands of miles across the ocean and make a better job of exploiting our fisheries than we do ourselves.

The minister spoke of a federal-provincial conference which is to be held on January 20, 1964. Personally I think it is unfortunate that this conference has been delayed so long. From my own point of view, Mr. Chairman, I am not too optimistic that this federal-provincial conference can produce anything that is going to be of any worth-while benefit to our fishermen next year. I think it would have been better and we would have obtained quicker results if the national conference could have been preceded by a series of regional conferences, because as I see it the east coast fisheries and the west coast fisheries are just as different as are eastern agriculture and western agriculture. They

have very little in common; and the inland fisheries are different still. We have a national program of fish inspection and we could probably have a national marketing program for fish, as we have for wheat. But our main problems on the east coast have to do with production and processing. That is why I think it would have been more beneficial if regional conferences could have been held before coming together at a national conference, to work out a national policy.

The minister spoke of improvements in technology, more mechanization, more automation and a greater use of electronic equipment. But in spite of this our fishing industry on the east coast is a sick industry. While I find it easy to agree with most of the things said by my hon. friend from Queens, I must disagree with one statement he made this evening when, if I heard him correctly, he complimented the minister and said this would be the finest set of estimates that he would be presenting. I disagree with this, because when I look at the estimates and see that they are \$1 million less this year than they were last year, in the face of the depressed condition of our industry and the need for rehabilitation, I find this decrease most disconcerting.

A national policy should not be too difficult to work out because we have already developed a national policy of assistance to the farmers. What we want is an adaptation of that policy to the fishery. There is a great similarity between the needs of the fisherman and the needs of the farmer.

The fisherman's needs are quite simple. In the first place, the fisherman wants a better price for his fish. In this connection we must recognize that in the maritime provinces a great deal of money has been spent by the provincial governments on the fishing industry, but in spite of this expenditure the fisherman is little better off today. The money that is spent does not seem to benefit him. The prices which our fishermen in Newfoundland get are sometimes 50 per cent lower—certainly 25 per cent or 30 per cent lower—than fishermen on the mainland get for the same size and type of fish, and that difference cannot be explained fully in terms of geography.

The fishermen in Newfoundland who were lucky enough to get a decent catch this year are getting a fair price, but that is not attributable to any policy of the federal or provincial governments. I say those fishermen "who were lucky enough to get a decent catch", because in many places there was a catch failure. This fair price is due to catch failures in European countries, especially Scandinavia, and in Iceland. These countries