

*Fisheries*

fisheries—has actually gone down. Usually the trade has been able to maintain prices to the fishermen, but the processors and distributors, caught in the middle, are in difficulties. This is the case today in Newfoundland. It has also been true as well of our freshwater fisheries.

It is true that we must improve our efficiency. We can do this in respect to catching methods, processing, the collection of fish, refrigeration to preserve quality and distribution. The corporation proposed in this bill will do that. It will be doing it, I expect, in a more efficient manner than the slipshod, relatively primitive, and unorganized way which has characterized most of our freshwater fish operations. There have been efficient operators and there are a few first class companies but, by and large, it is still an industry in a relatively early stage of development. By moving in with a single agency which will look after collecting, processing, interprovincial and international trade, we are doing what was done years ago with respect to wheat. We are enabling the fishermen—in the former case it was the wheat farmers—to get a better break, and over a period of time to make their product one that is highly desirable and will attract premium prices.

Through this single desk operation we will be able to do several things. Not only will we be able to bargain more effectively in the markets of all of North America, but we will also insist upon quality products, provide refrigeration and other plant necessary to preserve fish and maintain quality, as well as avoid duplication by streamlining facilities and arranging for higher load factors in plants, thus making the maximum use of our transportation system. Certainly, in this way the fisherman will enjoy the greater certainty of knowing what the floor price will be for the coming season. At the end of the season, if the corporation has been able to market fish at a higher price, the fisherman will get a supplementary payment. In other words, he will be receiving an income that he can predict with some certainty, and with greater accuracy than he could before, and will receive an income with which he can plan and invest.

This corporation will also be assisting the fisherman to finance his operations. It will grubstake him, in loose terminology, and assist him by paying for such things as fuel, his nets and so on. As I understand it, the corporation will not be helping him to buy a new boat or to make an even more substantial investment in new plant and other

fixtures. I hope that our own improved Fisheries Improvement Loans Act and the legislation respecting the fishermen's indemnity plan, which covers the risk of losses and so on, can be used for this purpose by the fishermen. I also notice that perhaps the department of northern affairs will be able to assist our native people, the Metis and others, in the financing of boats and so on; but basically I expect that the same improved capital assistance and insurance programs which are available right across the nation will be used in this case as well.

The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan) raised several points which I think are quite relevant. He referred to a speech that I had made in Boston about the fishing industry standing on its own feet. I hope that it will stand on its own feet and I am sure that he looks forward to the time when it can and will stand on its own feet.

Certain industries in this country are doing quite well at the moment, though we have others that are in some difficulty. It is the role of the government often to help industries adjust to new and changed circumstances, but I should like to see industries given adjustment assistance rather than perpetual assistance. The hon. member comes from an area where part of the fishing industry, at least, does need adjustment assistance. It needs assistance not on an ad hoc basis, a sort of band-aid, temporary basis implemented in the late spring of the year and terminated in the late fall of the same year; it needs a five, 10 or 15 year program. This is what industries like the salt fish industry on the east coast require.

It occurs to me that perhaps this particular industry also needs a salt fish marketing corporation similar to the freshwater fish marketing corporation. But such a body would have to be tailored to the particular circumstances, geared to improving the incomes of our fishermen, helping stabilize their industry, giving them a base from which they can plan ahead and helping rationalize and streamline the processing, sales and transportation phases of the industry so that returns from the market are greater.

Another big problem, one that is not totally confined to Canada, is getting a larger share of the retail price for goods sold outside the country. There are various ways of achieving this. Perhaps in one case it is achieved through the establishment of a crown corporation. Undoubtedly it is achieved through well organized, competent co-operatives and