

*Supply*

referred—are vested with my colleague, the Minister of the Environment. I will make sure that the hon. member's comments are brought to his attention.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Maltais:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to start by talking a little about my riding and I think it is the first time since Parliament reopened that we have been referring to that region. The constituency of Manicouagan as such is perhaps the largest in Canada. It stretches 600 miles along the shores of the St. Lawrence, and 1,250 miles from its south end up to Fort Chimo. It includes as well the Island of Anticosti. Most of the people I represent actually live between Sept-Îles, Blanc-Sablon and Anticosti island. It is therefore an area where there are many fishermen and yet which has been largely ignored in terms of its fisheries.

Since the House is in committee of the whole, I can stress these two peculiarities concerning the fishermen of my constituency, namely, the issue of their equipment and the issue of their fishing rights. From the interventions of my other colleagues I gather they are a lot more advanced in terms of fisheries than we are on the middle and the lower north shore as we call these areas. I would greatly appreciate the minister paying particular attention to what I am going to say because we seldom have an opportunity of raising these issues which are very real, given the fact that the area I represent is still at a very primary stage of its development.

We are facing a major problem when it comes to fishing equipment as well as grants for trawlers and small fishing boats, because we are having difficulty being recognized as people who depend exclusively on the fishing industry. When I refer to that area between Sept-Îles and Blanc-Sablon, as I explained earlier, that means 400 miles of coasts not serviced by road. This is very important. Therefore, those people who live in about 15 communities located all along those 400 miles of coastline depend exclusively on the fishing industry to make their living, and obviously their earnings are seasonal.

I urge the minister at least to take notice that he should do something for those fishermen so that they can modernize their equipment. The minister should also find ways of providing acceptable subsidies, because in many respects they are considered in fact as independent fishermen. There are no fishermen's organizations, of course, because of the long distances in such a large territory. I think it will be most important to make a detailed survey of the area I represent because we cannot talk in terms of fishermen's organizations now. I do not say that these would not be desirable, but they would just be unthinkable for the moment.

The fisheries policy which had been followed for some ten years has been very profitable for the people in my area, but the cuts that were made everywhere, which were justified in many regards, have brought us back 20 years in my area. The fact that we are so remote compared with the people of eastern

[Mr. McGrath.]

Canada should make our area the primary target for fisheries planning and basic equipment. I hope that fact will be recognized because for us it is fundamental.

The second point I want to raise in this debate relates to access to the sea. Of course it is fundamental for a fisherman to have immediate and easy access to the water, and here we are still requesting, even begging for boat launching ramps. For the people of an area who depend exclusively on fishing, that is unacceptable. The facilities requested do not cost much but they are absolutely necessary. We got the most help perhaps for fisheries, boat launching ramps, and fisheries organization and equipment from the Canada Works program.

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

**Mr. Maltais:** I must point out that we have been forced for the last four years to take advantage of a program aimed at helping other people and other groups, and in view of the priority that fisheries represent in our part of the country, we had to use up considerable amounts of the Canada Works program to meet the needs of fishermen. I believe that is unacceptable and I think the fisheries department should accept its responsibilities. I think that everyone understands very well the request I am making. The matter should really be examined closely and we should find within the Department of Fisheries or other departments enough money to be able to help those people.

Another point is the famous decision taken by the minister to allow trawlers of 100 feet or more into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Everywhere there is an outcry. First of all, people were not consulted. Further, since the policy of the former minister of fisheries and environment was brought forward, the stocks were replenished and there were many more catches than before, which was greatly appreciated by the fishermen.

As I said earlier, the danger we are concerned about now is that the fishermen who are not organized will suffer definitive revenue losses and might not be able to meet the local demand because the larger and better equipped trawlers will make more catches. I believe that this kind of decision is really tragic for the people of this area. And I am even more surprised that certain provinces in eastern Canada have remained silent. The \$117 million program established by the preceding government was extremely profitable and the province of Quebec was already benefiting from a five-year development plan.

This plan was developed in co-operation with the federal government of the time, at least as concerns budgets, and I now ask the minister whether his decision concerning certain cuts will directly affect the five-year plan of Quebec. As you will recall, some time ago the Quebec premier said that the major problem in decentralizing the Quebec fisheries department was to convince provincial public servants to move to the Gaspé area. He said it was more difficult to make the public