

*Supply—Fisheries*

occasion his exemplary views which anticipated reform were nullified as a result of the conduct of certain sealers. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, if my recollection is correct, within the last few days action has been threatened in the republic of Germany against the purchase of Canadian sealskins.

• (3:20 p.m.)

When the minister has established these new regulations he should make them available not only to the country I have mentioned but to other continental countries which purchase our sealskins so that the damage that has been done to this trade beyond our boundaries and to the sensibilities of Canadians will be rectified. The assurance given repeatedly in the past by the minister and the government that the cruelty had passed was assuredly more optimistic than has been borne out by developments thereafter.

The minister must not regard what I am saying in a personal sense because I think he has tried with all his might and main to remedy this situation. Unfortunately, those who give him advice have glossed the matter over and said there is nothing wrong. That is what they said two years ago; that is what they said last year. Now that the minister has had the benefit and experience of being present during the last seal killing period, with representatives of various organizations concerned in this matter. I know he will do everything that he can to solve the problem. He cannot obliterate the past but he can assure the future.

**Mr. Robichaud:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps I might be allowed to clarify the position once more. I want to make it clear to the right hon. Leader of the Opposition that the cruelties which have existed in the seal hunt in recent years have not existed only in the last two years. This situation had existed for generations. It may have been brought to the attention of the government in a more open way in the last two or three years. Unfortunately for Canada, or perhaps it is fortunate that the situation was brought forward in this way, the films shown in Germany which have caused such a sensation were taken three days before the opening of the season in 1964. They were put-up scenes by people who had no interest whatsoever in the sealing operation but were trying to create an image. Unfortunately they created a bad image for Canada. We received evidence of this earlier this year but too late to take action under the present regulations because the cruelty had occurred two years before. I

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

assure the right hon. gentleman that if we had known about this before definite action would have been taken. Not only are we trying to control the killing of seals in Canadian waters but we have succeeded in having this matter brought under the control of ICNAF, the International Convention for Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. At the meeting in Copenhagen two weeks ago the countries constituting ICNAF succeeded in bringing control of sealing on the high seas under the protocol of that organization. This is another step forward.

I would also point out to hon. members that the letters and pamphlets now being circulated in this connection refer to the operation last year. The S.P.C.A. officials who were on the ice, and myself, were able to witness the seal hunt and found that this type of cruelty was limited to a very small number of seal hunters. This year we are bringing in additional regulations which I hope will prevent even these abuses taking place.

**Mr. Keays:** Mr. Chairman, I intend to take but a few minutes on these estimates because, as has already been mentioned, they have received close scrutiny in committee. There are a few items I should like to raise at this time because of information that has come to us since the termination of the hearings of the committee.

First of all, I should like to commend the hon. member for Victoria (B.C.), who has offered to visit the sealing grounds in the spring of 1967. He will be leaving his constituency when the crocuses have gone and the tulips are in full bloom to come to the wind-swept ice of the St. Lawrence. In order to help him, I am sure that a few easterners could lend him warm clothing so he may have the greatest amount of comfort when he is on the floes of the St. Lawrence.

I endorse in large measure the answer given by the minister in so far as the killing of seals is concerned. I believe this is one of the resources with which we have been endowed by nature and we should use it wisely. It is imperative that some of these seals be killed every year, but the methods used must be those which commend themselves to the people as being the most humane possible. I believe we should continue research into ascertaining the best and most humane way in which seals can be killed in order to meet as much as possible the wishes of all those interested in the humane way of doing this