

*Fishing Industry*

moment it is taken by fishing gear. To minimize the effect of the spoilage process, vessels must be equipped to ensure the fish is handled carefully and quickly. The fish must be protected from weather and contamination and properly stowed and chilled in clean pens, boxes, or other suitable containers.

To this end, existing regulations will be amended to require all vessels to use such facilities. It is hoped certification of vessels over 100 feet can begin this year, with all vessels being certified through a phased program over the next couple of years.

In conjunction with certification, there will be a program of measures designed to encourage good handling practices on board fishing vessels. By basing landed quality grades on on-board handling practices, the government hopes to see an increase in such quality-oriented procedures as on-board bleeding, gutting and icing of fish. As well, storage of fish on board should be at a depth of no more than 90 centimetres, that is three feet, below deck, and the use of forks and pumps for handling fish will be discouraged.

In consultation with fishermen and buyers, the department is also developing quality grades as a basis upon which prices can be related to quality. Grades will be regulated initially on a voluntary basis, and industry graders who apply them will be licensed by the government. Discussions are continuing on this proposal and involve and seek the co-operation of fishermen, buyer's representatives and provincial governments to ensure consistency and uniformity in the application of standards.

**An hon. Member:** Who wrote that?

**Mr. Fleming:** Certainly not the hon. member opposite.

Another measure in the effort to ensure top quality will be the amendment of existing regulations to prohibit the use of forks for unloading, and to control the use of pumps and other unloading equipment which may damage the edible portion of fish. The regulations will require the upgrading of equipment used at landing sites and the icing or chilling of fish while held at dockside.

While existing transportation requirements with regard to sanitation and chilling are adequate, additional provisions regarding depth of bulk storage and dividers in trucks are needed to further protect quality. Again, extensive consultation with the industry will continue prior to the implementation of any new measures.

The provision of an approved water supply at all unloading ports remains a particularly difficult problem requiring either installation of water systems or modification of existing unloading practices where acceptable water cannot be made available. This problem will be dealt with on a port-by-port basis, with the objective of having fully approved water supplies or modified unloading systems in each port by 1985. In the meantime, an interim standard will be applied to ensure the quality and safety of fish products.

Another step in the process toward achieving the best possible quality for Canadian fish products is the development by the Fisheries Council of Canada, in consultation with the

department, of guidelines for good manufacturing practices. As well, at the request of the Fisheries Council, the department is drafting final product grade standards for groundfish fillets, including fillet blocks, frozen herring fillets, and cured herring products.

These forward-thinking measures, Mr. Speaker, are not the product of a government lacking in support of the Canadian fishing industry. They, and others to be enunciated by my colleagues who are also participating in this debate, represent positive action on the part of a government which believes in the vitality and viability of the industry and which, through extensive consultation, believes in developing policy in conjunction with the industry.

The government is proud of those Canadians who participate in this nation's fishing industry and it will continue to work with them and for them in support of their efforts.

I am sure other hon. members look forward, as I do, to hearing not only from a number of hon. members on this side of the House on the great progress made in the Canadian fishing industry, due in good part to the support of the federal government, but also to my colleague, the hon. member for Egmont, the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Henderson) and former minister of fisheries in Prince Edward Island.

● (1600)

**Mr. Mel Gass (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to address myself to the New Democratic Party motion which condemns the government for its failure to support the Canadian fishing industry. The New Democratic Party must have looked long and hard to find an issue on which to condemn the government, yet it found one, the fishing industry. When it comes to managing the fishing industry the record of the Liberal government has been so poor that even the NDP cannot go to bed with the Liberals with regard to this part of our economy.

Last week when the NDP chose, with the Liberals, to handcuff this House by way of ending debate on something as important as our constitution, I thought this House would have to make provision for putting 31 more members on the government side of the House. I say 31, because only one member of the New Democratic Party gave serious thought to what was being done to this House. My friend and colleague, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath), put it correctly when he said that the NDP sold its soul for some potash.

Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would like to call the attention of the hon. member to the motion before the House, and the question of relevance is involved at this point.

**Mr. Gass:** Mr. Speaker, the fishing industry is being managed so poorly by the federal government that if it were not dragging so many people down to subsistence living, it would be a joke. However, the fishermen of Canada do not refer to the fishing industry as a joke. It is deadly serious.