

ently structured, is simply unable to monitor effectively the freshwater fishery.

There are other problems with which fishermen had had to contend. These are problems that fishermen themselves have brought to me, or that the co-operatives have tried to solve through resolutions—the majority of which, unfortunately, have fallen on deaf ears in the past. Not only has there been an over-all reduction in the number of fishermen, as I mentioned earlier, but there has been a marked decrease in the pounds of fish harvested. Fish not removed from lakes in the 1973-74 fishing season, for example, represented a total loss to the northern Manitoba economy of \$2,123,336.

One of the most obvious reasons for this loss—and again, let me assure you there are many—is in the area of economics. Money lost through transportation costs represents by far the largest loss to fishermen. Rail and air transportation costs have risen to such an extent that freshwater fishermen in Manitoba are having a hard time absorbing costs. For example, air transportation from lake to railhead went up from \$1.80 per ton mile to \$3.20. Railways have doubled their freight rates. They have suggested that freight equalization be applied on the lake to rail, and rail or highway transportation.

The co-ops have also been faced with rising equipment costs. In fact these have doubled in the last few years. Wages for hired labour have increased from \$300 per month to \$600 per month. Even more shocking is the fact that, under present circumstances, fishermen are unable to dispose of their licences to heirs, successors, or to other fishermen. The average age of fishermen who fish Lake Winnipeg is 60 years of age. It is so difficult for young men to obtain operators' licences that many have given up fishing or have not even attempted to get a licence.

We know that the freshwater fish produced are of a high quality and are of a species readily marketed. Why then are fishermen dissatisfied with the way in which their operations are being handled, and why then do they think that a separate standing committee to deal with freshwater and inland fishing is so important to the success of their operations? A letter I received from the manager of Northern Co-operative Fisheries Limited best answers that question. The letter stated that:

... Generally speaking the fishermen, the agents, the corporation are trying to work on 100 cents on the dollar, while the actual cost is 125 cents on a dollar.

One paragraph of the letter effectively summed up the feelings of fishermen. It went like this:

I could almost assure you that it, lack of recognition, will destroy the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board within a year or two and I am saying this because the signs of erosion are all around us.

For example, the letter goes on to state:

The 1,400 fishermen belonging to 25 co-operatives and associations in the province of Saskatchewan have already delivered their ultimatum to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation that they will no longer deliver their fish in the traditional manner. Instead, they are asking the corporation to market their fish on a fee for service basis. Failing to accept this proposal, they will ask their minister ... to withdraw the commercial fisheries from the participating region of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Freshwater Fisheries

● (1610)

A resolution submitted to the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Co-operatives Fisheries held in Prince Albert March 23, 24, and 25 of 1975 stated, and I will read this resolution in its entirety:

WHEREAS commercial fishermen in the Province of Saskatchewan and Manitoba are continuously experiencing difficulties in communication with the federal government,

AND WHEREAS the fishing operations are being complex and requiring assistance similar to the East and West Coastal Fisheries,

AND WHEREAS the present Parliamentary Fisheries Committee is made up of Eastern M.P.s who are not acquainted with the inland fisheries program,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, appoint an inland freshwater fish parliamentary committee to assist the freshwater fishing industry in their problems which lie within the jurisdiction of the Federal Committee.

This resolution refers to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Let me say that I first presented the idea to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry quite some time ago. In fact it was in 1974. I want to emphasize that again I am asking that consideration be given to this proposal.

I wish to refer to the resolution as submitted at the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Co-operatives Fisheries held in Prince Albert on March 23, 24 and 25 of 1976, just this past week. At that meeting there were representatives from all the major fisheries in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, and Ontario. This is the resolution, and it is hoped there will be a more positive response to it:

WHEREAS the 1975 Resolution No. 10 requested that the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, appoint an Inland Freshwater Fishery Parliamentary Standing Committee to assist with the problems relating to the Freshwater Fish Industry within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

WHEREAS, the Honourable Minister replied that there are three (3) Members on the Committee who represent the Freshwater Fisheries and that Quebec and New Brunswick also have a freshwater fishery and both Provinces have representation on this Committee.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that another request be made to the Honourable Minister of Fisheries pointing out the volume of the freshwater fishery production in other provinces, such as Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories and that he give his utmost consideration towards appointing a sitting Member from each of the above-mentioned Provinces and Territories to the proposed Standing Committee of Fisheries in the House of Commons.

The resolutions of 1975 and again of 1976 came from concerned fishermen. They did not come from agents and so forth. They came from people who are trying to make a living from commercial fishing in the freshwater fishing industry. In Manitoba a group of fishermen from north of the fifty-third parallel have formed the Northern Commercial Fishermen's Association. Fishermen throughout the north are becoming more and more concerned. They are not operating in a piecemeal manner. They are operating as a group, but they want to get a fair return for the effort they put into the fishing industry. They have been in it all their lives. At one time they could make a fairly reasonable living from fishing, but the high cost of transportation today seems to be the most important aspect of their problem. I ask the minister to consider very seriously having a separate committee to deal with the freshwater and inland fishery. That is a resource we have had for a long time, and it is renewable.