

Supply—Fisheries

An estimate of slightly over \$1 million is set aside for the operation and maintenance of the inspection branch. I want to congratulate the minister and his department for the responsibility that has been assumed in assuring that the fish reach the buyer and consumer in prime condition. A rigid system of inspection is necessary for raw material as well as for the operating methods and plant sanitation. Considerable progress has been achieved in this field during the last three or four years and further efforts should be made to train help in the various operations involved in handling, curing and preparing for market the various fish products.

I was pleased to see the minister, his deputy and his chief of the inspection staff attend the annual meeting of the National Fisheries Institute of America at Cleveland, Ohio, earlier this week. I am convinced, from the minister's own statement this afternoon, that he and his deputy minister came back impressed by what was said and what they saw at the National Fisheries Institute meeting concerning the possibilities for our deep-sea fishing industry. This new method of marketing frozen or pre-cooked cod fillets, known as fish sticks, could easily revolutionize our cod fishing industry. It could easily mean an additional outlet for approximately 30 million pounds of frozen cod fillets or 90 million pounds of fresh ground fish. Here again I strongly urge the minister and his department to closely follow this new development and, through adequate controls, prevent abuses that might lead to the loss of this important new outlet.

It was with satisfaction that I listened to the minister earlier this afternoon tell the house about the improvement in market conditions for the different varieties of fish. The sending of a trade mission to Portugal, Greece and Italy should be of great benefit to the salt cod industry. His statement concerning the condition of our domestic market was most encouraging, and his department is to be complimented for its achievement in this field.

The newly created markets and economic service has added much needed statistical information on the fisheries of Canada. The department is to be commended for its activities and close attention to current events affecting the market for fish, as well as its closer relationship with the trade commission service of the Department of Trade and Commerce. The establishment of a program of insurance for fishermen's boats and gear is another evidence of the department's determination to improve the social welfare of Canadian fishermen. Let us hope that the minister will consider the advisability of

extending this benefit to a wider field, covering additional types of gear and larger fishing vessels.

I should like to bring to the minister's attention a resolution passed at the last annual meeting of the fisheries council of Canada held in Ottawa on April 26-28 last. The resolution reads as follows:

Therefore be it resolved that the fisheries council of Canada request the government of Canada to amend the present regulations so as to permit fishing craft over 65 feet in length of Canadian registry to fish to within three miles of the coastline of Canada.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I wish to question the advisability of such a move. I realize that foreign registered craft are permitted to fish to within three miles of the Canadian coast line. I understand also that there is no indication that within the near future there may be international agreement on the twelve mile limit for coastal waters. I would suggest, however, that before taking any decision to amend existing regulations serious consideration be given to the condition of deep-sea fishermen along the Quebec, Prince Edward Island and northeastern New Brunswick shores.

In Gloucester county we have one of the most modern and most effective deep-sea fishing fleets on this continent. In less than eight years our fishermen, with federal and provincial assistance, have built up a fleet of 50 modern draggers valued at over \$1.75 million. This fleet has revolutionized the entire fishing industry of the area, and in the last few years Quebec and Prince Edward Island have adopted our fishing methods. All these vessels measure less than 60 feet in length, and their yearly operation is limited to less than six months because of ice conditions. In view of this situation I would suggest that the interested fishermen be consulted before any decision is reached concerning this resolution.

Before closing my remarks I should like to call to the minister's attention a matter of great concern to our commercial fishermen. It is unfortunate that our fishermen cannot qualify for unemployment insurance benefits. It is true that this particular problem comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour, but I am suggesting to the Minister of Fisheries that a joint committee be formed representing the departments here to study the possibility of covering commercial fishermen by unemployment insurance. I cannot see why an engineer, cook or deckhand employed for a period of five or six months a year on a fishing vessel, cannot be asked to contribute to the unemployment insurance fund in order to qualify for benefits during his period of unemployment in the winter