

Freshwater Fish Marketing Report

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker, I was endeavouring to explain just why it was necessary, as a result of conditions which existed in the committee, to bring the amendment before the house at the present time. I would not wish my words to be construed as a reflection on the chairman of the committee, for the evidence will show that he has been fair and impartial. The doubts which I mentioned expressed my concern about the over-all effectiveness of the entire committee system.

When the rules were changed, the members of the house and the Canadian people were led to believe that more authority would be placed in the hands of the committees. They were to serve as a sounding board for legislation, in the hope that out of our deliberations would come changes and improvements which would be helpful. This was my understanding. The function of the committees was to speed up the legislative process, so that the time spent in committee would not have to be spent again in the house. This may have been all right in theory, but in actual practice it is not working out according to plan. We must still come to the house with our amendments, suggestions and recommendations for improvement in the legislation, in the hope that the government will take our recommendations seriously.

It is for these reasons that I have filed notice, pursuant to standing order 75 (5), that Bill C-148, an act to regulate interprovincial and export trade in freshwater fish and to establish the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation be amended by these three amendments:

That Clause 3 (1) be amended by placing a semi-colon after the word "province", on line 14 and by substituting a comma for a period after the word "years" and adding thereto the following:

"and shall be actively engaged in the fresh water fishing industry as fishermen".

That Clause 18 (1) be amended by striking out the word "may" in the first line thereof and substituting therefor the word "shall" and by adding after the word "Committee" in the last line thereof the following:

"and at least one-third of whom shall be actively engaged in the fresh water fishing industry as fishermen".

That Clause 17 be amended by adding thereto a new sub-clause (3) as follows:

"The accounts and financial transactions of the corporation shall be audited annually by the Auditor General".

I wish to make it very clear that we in this party are not opposing the legislation. During the various discussion stages of the bill we made certain recommendations which we thought would be helpful, but at no time

have we registered direct opposition to the measure now before us. We are hopeful that some of the many problems faced by our inland fishermen will be resolved by the marketing corporation, and that the major goal of the corporation, which is to obtain a larger share of the export price and of the consumer price for the fishermen, will be realized. To date the Canadian inland fishermen, when selling their fish, have been in a relatively weak bargaining position, and if they did not like the prices offered for their fish all they could do was to threaten to quit. But this would have been an empty threat, for in many instances the fishermen have no other training and there are no other employment opportunities available to them. I am informed that this is especially true in the northern parts of Saskatchewan, in Manitoba, Alberta and in northern Ontario where the fishermen are mostly Indians and Métis.

The very remoteness of these fish producing areas has presented vast problems to this particular industry, and in my opinion this factor will continue to present a very thorny problem to the marketing corporation, which it will require all the ingenuity, imagination and resourcefulness of the president and his associates to surmount. According to the McIvor Commission report—a commission appointed in July of 1965 to bring in recommendations on this important industry—the fishermen in our inland freshwater fishing industry receive only some 50 to 60 per cent of the export price. It is the major task and responsibility of this marketing corporation to increase the percentage of return to our fishermen, otherwise this whole exercise—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must confess to the hon. member that it is not clear to me in what way what he is saying now relates to the amendment before the housing. As I see it, the amendment: "and shall be actively engaged in the fresh water fishing industry as fishermen" should be the subject of a limited debate in the house. The hon. member knows that there has already been a general debate on second reading and there will be another debate on third reading. If the rules are to be interpreted in such a way that there may be a third general debate at the report stage, I would think we will be heading into difficulty in the interpretation of the rules. So I invite the hon. member to limit his remarks within reason to the particular amendment now before the house.