

*Fisheries*

of our fish in the past. I should like to hear from the minister whether such negotiations have in fact been commenced.

Another recommendation was that a co-operative educational effort be made by all levels of government to acquaint the fishermen with the operations of the board. I support this recommendation and think it is important that such efforts be made by the government and by the new board. I think I can say from my own background in Saskatchewan, and as a supporter of the political party which first introduced orderly marketing in the fishing industry, that one of the things learned from experience was the necessity of doing more educational work to inform those affected of the benefits of the action which is being taken.

The commission further recommended that research pertaining to freshwater fish and freshwater fish products be continued and expanded where desirable. In my view such expansion is necessary; reference is made in the report again to some of the infections which have affected the quality of our fish.

Finally, a recommendation was made that the opening and closing of fishing seasons on lakes be determined collectively by the governments concerned in order to facilitate the co-ordination of supply and demand. I note from the minister's introductory remarks that the decision has been made, apparently, to leave these decisions in the hands of the provinces. I can understand that acceptance of the recommendation would have involved negotiation with the provinces. The government may have decided to try to achieve the desired results through voluntary co-operation rather than through any attempt at direction from the federal level. Nevertheless, I am concerned about this point because by the very nature of the wording of the recommendation the commission showed concern about the co-ordination of supply and demand in this context. I believe further consideration should be given to this aspect and I would appreciate hearing the minister's comments on it.

I conclude by repeating that we welcome this legislation. It will not automatically solve the problems which face the fishing industry. There is room for further extension and expansion of the activities of the corporation once it has gained some experience in its operations. I certainly hope that its work will be to the benefit of the people of Canada.

[Mr. Burton.]

**Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries):** Needless to say, I support this legislation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Davis:** I support any legislation which, in addition to helping to stabilize the fishing industry will also, in the years to come, help to increase the incomes of fishermen.

In the case of fishermen on the prairies and in the northwest territories, we need one particular device. Essentially, it is a device for single desk selling on the United States market. This will enable us to improve the condition of the industry and provide a better return to the fishermen themselves. In other words, this bill and the corporation which will be set up as a result of it, will put us in a stronger bargaining position in the United States; it will enable us to streamline the process of the manufacture and transportation of fish products and will provide a better return to fishermen and a more certain price for their products.

I am not convinced that this device is the only one which can be used. It is certainly not one which we should use in all parts of Canada. Reference has been made to the fact that this particular legislation, for the time being at least, will cover northwestern Ontario, the prairies, the northwest territories and the Yukon. It does not cover all Ontario. It does not cover the fishing on Lake Erie, for example, where in the last few years the catch of perch has been growing rapidly. It has been growing under the impetus of private enterprise, and it is proving very successful, because of the selling initiatives including the use of wholesale and retail channels in the United States, the use of well known brand names, and so on.

• (8:40 p.m.)

Our supply of fish, on and off, has been in a surplus position, but looking ahead some years I think the supply will fall behind market demand. I think the time will come when fish will increasingly be in short supply rather than surplus supply. In other words, the long term prospects are good, but we have to get through an intermediate period, which may run for five or ten years and use various devices to improve our bargaining position.

The market price in the United States of late has remained roughly constant or has increased slightly; it certainly has not fallen. At the same time, and in marked contrast to this the return to the fishermen of Canada—this is particularly true of our salt water