

*Fisheries Development Act*

● (1530)

As I recall from our committee discussions, the Minister of Fisheries has said that these programs are available to those engaged in the inland fisheries. This question was raised partly because jurisdiction over fisheries management on the prairies, in Ontario and in the territories has not been vested directly in the Department of Fisheries but has been delegated to provincial authorities for purposes of administration. For a long time I have thought that because of that particular administrative arrangement the federal Department of Fisheries has not paid as much attention to the potential development of our inland fisheries as it might have done.

One of the main considerations which must be borne in mind when one thinks of the potential of the fisheries industry in Canada is this: because of our geographic extent and because many parts of the country are far from the sea where fishing is traditionally carried on, it is difficult to transport fish to places far from where it is caught and to make sure it arrives in good condition. Fish, unlike beef, does not improve with hanging; if it is not handled carefully it deteriorates quickly. Thus, in the interest of providing quality, attractive, high protein food for Canadian consumers, fisheries resources should be developed as closely as possible to centres of population.

What I have to say in this connection has particular application to the freshwater inland fisheries of Canada. This problem was given major attention at the federal-provincial fisheries conference held in Ottawa in 1964. The governments of the three prairie provinces showed their interest by attending the conference. Ministers of those three governments were prepared to come to grips with the policy issues involved. The result of the conference was the establishment of the Freshwater Fisheries Marketing Board. That board, unfortunately, got off to a bad start. I do not know if our fisheries committee has received the answer as to how and why this happened, but it became very apparent that poor management people were put in charge of the board in its initial stages. The resulting setback was most unfortunate for the welfare of fishermen of inland areas. Hopefully, steps are under way to rectify that situation. From my assessment, I still think the idea was sound; I say this on the basis of facts which were brought forward when the formal proposal was made to establish this marketing board.

There is a fair potential for developing a freshwater fish market domestically and in the central parts of the country to the south. There is a fair potential, therefore, for an export market. For these reasons, I feel that the Minister of Fisheries should pay attention to the development of the industry so that it meets its potential. This bill is important in connection with assistance for the construction and modification of existing vessels, that is to say, existing vessels which must be improved and brought up to standard. It is also important for providing vessels with equipment which will enable them to preserve fish. The minister should also see how the program can best be applied to the development of fisheries in the freshwater fishing areas of Canada. I think I have said what needs to be said on this bill on second reading. I await with interest the response of the government when this debate is to close.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé):** Mr. Speaker, I hope to speak no longer than thirty seconds.

The purpose of the bill we are studying is to amend the Fisheries Development Act. The whole problem is to add four words to the existing act. This has been suggested last fall, when we were studying Bill C-4 during the first session of the 29th Parliament.

What we have said since eleven o'clock this morning is 90 per cent repetition of the debates we have had in committee on the 1974-75 estimates and during the study of this bill, during the first session.

As all other members, I would like to see this bill adopted by the House today, to allow the fishermen from Gaspésie and from all over the country to take advantage of the amendment, this summer.

For this very reason, Mr. Speaker, I ask that the bill be referred immediately to the Committee of the Whole so that it may be adopted after third reading and submitted to the Senate.

[English]

**Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, I am not usually loquacious, nor is it usual for me to take part in a debate unless I feel I have something important to say. I presume, therefore, that when I resume my seat the House will be in the position to give this bill second reading. Perhaps hon. members may then be inclined to proceed to private members' hour.

As the previous speaker said, this is a small amendment to the act which was amended about a year ago. The act relates to the provision of grants for cold storage and other facilities which would preserve the quality of fish products and would improve the harvesting of the living resources of the sea. This bill is a further small amendment, to assist in the modification of fishing vessels as well as in their construction. Simple amendments such as this reflect fairly important trends in the industry. For example, it is now recognized that fish stocks, fishery resources, are no longer limitless. They never were. Until fairly recently many thought that such resources were limitless, that no matter how many fish you took from the sea, there were always more. Now we realize that fish stocks are limited. Some of them are overexploited while others have potential which is not being exploited at the present time.

● (1540)

In situations of that sort, in some cases it is necessary and desirable that fishing vessels which have been designed for a particular type of fishery be modified to take part in the exploitation of a different resource. This happens from time to time. There is also the necessity of modernizing fishing boats so that the catch can be preserved more efficiently and to eliminate the rather large waste experienced in the fishing industry through the quality of the catch deteriorating before landing. This is another important recognition. We must exploit our resources in a way that is not wasteful. We must develop methods of catching and processing stocks of fish used for human food.